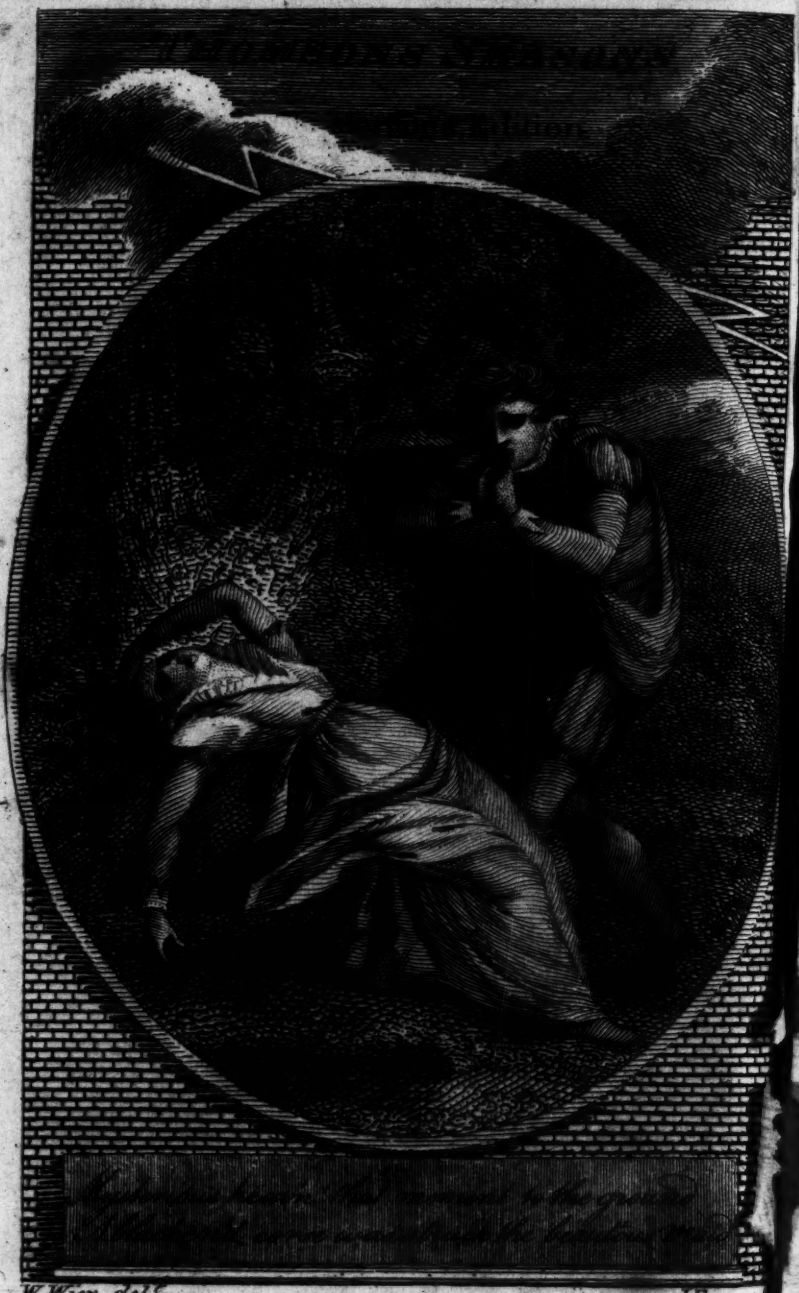

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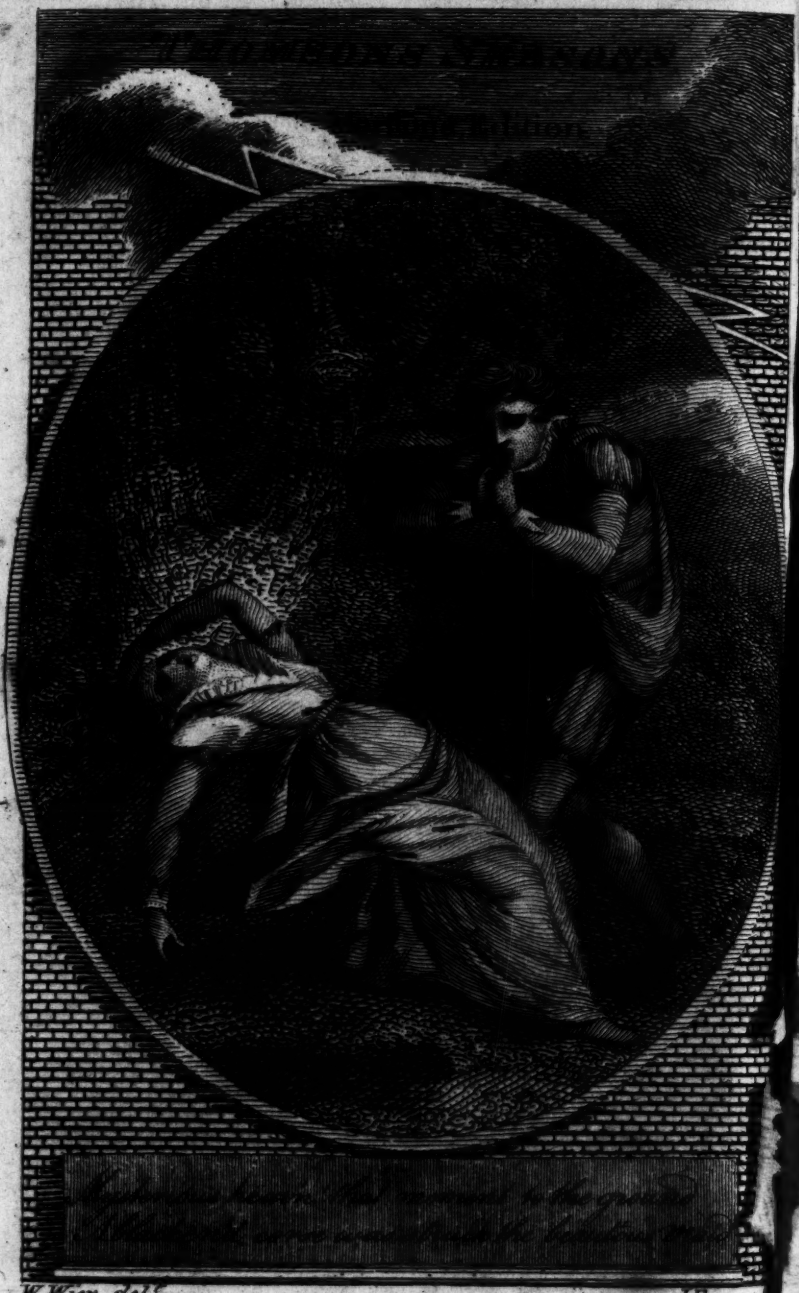

W. Wier del.^t

I. Beugo

THE SEASONS,

BY

JAMES THOMSON.

A NEW EDITION:

WITH BIRRELL'S BEAUTIFUL PRINT OF

LAVINIA, AND OTHER PLATES.

ALSO,

AN ORIGINAL LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

AND

A CRITICAL ESSAY ON THE SEASONS.

BY ROBERT HERON.

VOLUME SECOND.

PERTH:

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THE SEASONS.

AUTUMN.

The Argument.

The ſubject propoſed.—Addreſſed to Mr Onslow.—A proſpect of the fields ready for harveſt.—Reflections in praiſe of induſtry raiſed by that view.—Reaping.—A tale relative to it.—A harveſt ſtorm.—Shooting and hunting, their barbarity.—A ludicrous account of fox-hunting.—A view of an orchard.—Wall-fruit.—A vineyard.—A deſcription of fogs, frequent in the latter part of Autumn: whence a digreſſion, enquiring into the riſe of fountains and rivers.—Birds of ſeaſon conſidered, that now ſhift their habitation.—The prodigious number of them that cover the northern and weſtern iſles of Scotland.—Hence a view of the country.—A proſpect of the diſcolour'd, fading woods.—After a gentle duſky day, moon-light.—Autumnal meteors.—Morning: to which ſucceeds a calm, pure, ſun-ſhiny day, ſuch as uſually ſhuts up the ſeaſon.—The harveſt being gathered in, the country diſſolved in joy.—The whole concludes with a panegyric on a philoſophical country life.

Crown'd with the ſickle and the wheaten ſheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on; the Doric reed once more,

Well pleas'd, I tune. Whate'er the Wintry froſt
Nitrous prepar'd; the various-bloſſom'd Spring 5
Put in white promiſe forth; and Summer-ſuns
Concocted ſtrong, ruſh boundleſs now to view,
Full, perfect all, and ſwell my glorious theme.

Onslow! the Muſe, ambitious of thy name,
To grace, inſpire, and dignify her ſong, 10
Would from the Public Voice thy gentle ear
A while engage. Thy noble cares ſhe knows,
The patriot virtues that diſtend thy thought,
Spread on thy front, and in thy boſom glow;
While liſtening ſenates hang upon thy tongue, 15
Devolving thro' the maze of eloquence
A roll of periods, ſweeter than her ſong.
But ſhe too pants for public virtue, ſhe,
Tho' weak of power, yet ſtrong in ardent will,
Whene'er her country ruſhes on her heart, 20
Aſſumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.

When the bright Virgin gives the beauteous days,
And Libra weighs in equal ſcales the year;
From heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence ſhook 25
Of parting Summer, a ſerener blue,
With golden light enliven'd, wide inveſts
The happy world. Attemper'd ſuns ariſe,
Sweet-beam'd, and ſhedding oft thro' lucid clouds

A pleasing calm; while broad, and brown, below 30
Extensive harvests hang the heavy head.
Rich, silent, deep, they stand; for not a gale
Rolls its light billows o'er the bending plain:
A calm of plenty! till the ruffled air
Falls from its poise, and gives the breeze to blow. 35
Rent is the fleecy mantle of the sky;
The clouds fly different; and the sudden sun
By fits effulgent gilds th' illumin'd field,
And black by fits the shadows sweep along.
A gaily-checker'd heart-expanding view, 40
Far as the circling eye can shoot around,
Unbounded tossing in a flood of corn.

These are thy blessings, Industry! rough power!
Whom labour still attends, and sweat, and pain;
Yet the kind source of every gentle art, 45
And all the soft civility of life:
Raiser of human kind! by Nature cast,
Naked, and helpless, out amid the woods
And wilds, to rude inclement elements;
With various seeds of art deep in the mind 50
Implanted, and profusely pour'd around
Materials infinite; but idle all.
Still unexerted, in th' unconscious breast,
Slept the lethargic powers; corruption still,
Voracious, swallow'd what the liberal hand 55
Of bounty scatter'd o'er the savage year:

Well pleas'd, I tune. Whate'er the Wintry frost
Nitrous prepar'd; the various-blossom'd Spring 5
Put in white promise forth; and Summer-suns
Concocted strong, rush boundless now to view,
Full, perfect all, and swell my glorious theme.

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To grace, inspire, and dignify her song, 10
Would from the Public Voice thy gentle ear
A while engage. Thy noble cares she knows,
The patriot virtues that distend thy thought,
Spread on thy front, and in thy bosom glow;
While listening senates hang upon thy tongue, 15
Devolving thro' the maze of eloquence
A roll of periods, sweeter than her song.
But she too pants for public virtue, she,
Tho' weak of power, yet strong in ardent will,
Whene'er her country rushes on her heart, 20
Assumes a bolder note, and fondly tries
To mix the patriot's with the poet's flame.

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And Libra weighs in equal scales the year;
From heaven's high cope the fierce effulgence shook 25
Of parting Summer, a serener blue,
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Of bounty scatter'd o'er the savage year:

And ſtill the ſad barbarian, roving, mix'd
With beaſts of prey; or for his acorn-meal
Fought the fierce tuſky boar; a ſhivering wretch!
Aghaſt, and comfortleſs, when the bleak north, 60
With Winter charg'd, let the mix'd tempeſt fly,
Hail, rain, and ſnow, and bitter-breathing froſt:
Then to the ſhelter of the hut he fled;
And the wild ſeaſon, ſordid pin'd away.
For home he had not; home is the reſort 65
Of love, of joy, of peace and plenty, where,
Supporting and ſupported, poliſh'd friends,
And dear relations mingle into bliſs.
But this the rugged ſavage never felt,
Even deſolate in crowds; and thus his days 70
Roll'd heavy, dark, and unenjoy'd along:
A waſte of time! till INDUSTRY approach'd,
And rous'd him from his miſerable ſloth:
His faculties unfolded; pointed out,
Where laviſh Nature the directing hand 75
Of Art demanded; ſhew'd him how to raiſe
His feeble force by the mechanic powers,
To dig the mineral from the vaulted earth,
On what to turn the piercing rage of fire,
On what the torrent, and the gather'd blaſt; 80
Gave the tall ancient foreſt to his ax;
Taught him to chip the wood, and hew the ſtone,
Till by degrees the finiſh'd fabric roſe;
Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,

And wrapt them in the woolly-veſtment warm, 85
Or bright in gloſſy ſilk, and flowing lawn;
With wholeſome viands fill'd his table, pour'd
The generous glaſs around, inſpir'd to wake
The life-refining ſoul of decent wit:
Nor ſtopp'd at barren bare neceſſity; 90
But ſtill advancing bolder, led him on
To pomp, to pleaſure, elegance, and grace;
And, breathing high ambition thro' his ſoul
Set ſcience, wiſdom, glory, in his view,
And bade him be the Lord of all below. 95

Then gathering men their natural pow'rs combin'd,
And form'd a Public; to the general good
Submitting, aiming, and conducting all.
For this the Patriot-Council met, the full,
The free, and fairly repreſented Whole; 100
For this they plann'd the holy guardian laws,
Diſtinguiſh'd orders, animated arts,
And with joint force, Oppreſſion chaining, ſet
Imperial Juſtice at the helm; yet ſtill
To them accountable: nor ſlaviſh dream'd 105
That toiling millions muſt reſign their weal,
And all the honey of their ſearch, to ſuch
As for themſelves alone, themſelves have rais'd.

Hence every form of cultivated life
In order ſet, protected, and inſpir'd, 110

Into perfection wrought. Uniting all,
Society grew numerous, high, polite,
And happy. Nurse of Art! the City rear'd
In beauteous pride her tower-encircled head; 114
And, stretching street on street, by thousands drew,
From twining woody haunts, or the tough yew
To bows strong-straining, her aspiring sons.

THEN COMMERCE brought into the public walk
The busy merchant; the big ware-house built; 119
Rais'd the strong crane; choak'd up the loaded street
With foreign plenty; and thy stream, O THAMES,
Large, gentle, deep, majestic, king of floods!
Chose for his grand resort. On either hand,
Like a long wint'ry forest, groves of masts
Shot up their spires; the bellying sheet between 125
Possess'd the breezy void; the sooty hulk,
Steer'd sluggish on; the splendid barge along
Row'd, regular, to harmony; around,
The boat, light-skimming, stretch'd its oary wings;
While deep the various voice of fervent toil 130
From bank to bank increas'd; whence ribb'd with oak,
To bear the BRITISH THUNDER, black, and bold,
The roaring vessel rush'd into the main.

THEN too the pillar'd dome, magnific, heav'd
Its ample roof; and luxury within 135
Pour'd out her glitt'ring stores: the canvass smooth,

With glowing life protuberant, to the view
Embodied rose; the statue seem'd to breathe,
And soften into flesh, beneath the touch
Of forming art, imagination-flush'd. 140

All is the gift of Industry; whate'er
Exalts, embellishes, and renders life
Delightful. Pensive Winter cheer'd by him
Sits at the social fire, and happy hears
Th' excluded tempest idly rave along; 145
His harden'd fingers deck the gaudy Spring;
Without him Summer were an arid waste;
Nor to th' Autumnal months could thus transmit
Those full, mature, immeasurable stores,
That, waving round, recal my wand'ring song. 150

Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky,
And, unperceiv'd, unfolds the spreading day;
Before the ripen'd field the reapers stand,
In fair array; each by the lass he loves,
To bear the rougher part, and mitigate 155
By nameless gentle offices her toil.
At once they stoop and swell the lusty sheaves;
While thro' their chearful band the rural talk,
The rural scandal, and the rural jest,
Fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time, 160
And steal unfelt the sultry hours away.
Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks;

And, conſcious, glancing oft on every ſide
His ſated eye, feels his heart heave with joy.
The gleaners ſpread around, and here and there, 165
Spike after ſpike, their ſcanty harveſt pick.
Be not too narrow, huſbandmen! but fling
From the full ſheaf, with charitable ſtealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh grateful think!
How good the God of Harvest is to you; 170
Who pours abundance o'er your flowing fields;
While theſe unhappy partners of your kind
Wide-hover round you, like the fowls of heaven,
And aſk their humble dole. The various turns
Of fortune ponder; that your ſons may want 175
What now, with hard reluctance, faint, ye give.

The lovely young Lavinia once had friends;
And Fortune ſmil'd, deceitful, on her birth.
For, in her helpleſs years depriv'd of all,
Of every ſtay, ſave Innocence and Heaven, 180
She, with her widow'd mother, feeble, old,
And poor, liv'd in a cottage, far retir'd
Among the windings of a woody vale;
By ſolitude and deep ſurrounding ſhades,
But more by baſhful modeſty conceal'd. 185
Together thus they ſhunn'd the cruel ſcorn
Which virtue, ſunk to poverty, would meet
From giddy faſhion and low-minded pride:
Almoſt on Nature's common bounty fed;

Burrell sc

LAVINIA.

Engraved for Morison's Edition of Thomson's Seasons from an original painting

Like the gay birds that ſung them to repoſe, 190
Content, and careleſs of to-morrow's fare.
Her form was freſher than the morning-roſe,
When the dew wets its leaves; unſtain'd, and pure,
As is the lily, or the mountain-ſnow.
The modeſt virtues mingled in her eyes, 195
Still on the ground dejected, darting all
Their humid beams into the blooming flowers:
Or when the mournful tale her mother told,
Of what her faithleſs fortune promis'd once,
Thrill'd in her thought, they, like the dewy ſtar 200
Of evening, ſhone in tears. A native grace
Sat fair proportion'd on her poliſh'd limbs,
Veil'd in a ſimple robe, their beſt attire,
Beyond the pomp of dreſs; for lovelineſs
Needs not the foreign aid of ornament, 205
But is, when unadorn'd, adorn'd the moſt.
Thoughtleſs of beauty, ſhe was beauty's ſelf,
Recluſe amid the cloſe-embowering woods.
As in the hollow breaſt of Appenine,
Beneath the ſhelter of encircling hills, 210
A myrtle riſes, far from human eye,
And breathes its balmy fragrance o'er the wild;
So flouriſh'd blooming, and unſeen by all,
The ſweet LAVINIA; till, at length, compell'd
By ſtrong Neceſſity's ſupreme command, 215
With ſmiling patience in her looks, ſhe went
To glean PALEMON's fields. The pride of ſwains

PALEMON was, the generous, and the rich;
Who led the rural life in all its joy
And elegance, ſuch as Arcadian ſong 220
Tranſmits from ancient uncorrupted times;
When tyrant cuſtom had not ſhackled Man,
But free to follow Nature was the mode.
He then, his fancy with autumnal ſcenes
Amuſing, chanc'd beſide his reaper-train 225
To walk, when poor LAVINIA drew his eye;
Unconſcious of her power, and turning quick
With unaffected bluſhes from his gaze:
He ſaw her charming, but he ſaw not half
The charms her downcaſt modeſty conceal'd. 230
That very moment love and chaſte deſire
Sprung in his boſom, to himſelf unknown;
For ſtill the world prevail'd, and its dread laugh,
Which ſcarce the firm philoſopher can ſcorn,
Should his heart own a gleaner in the field: 235
And thus in ſecret to his ſoul he ſigh'd.

"WHAT pity! that ſo delicate a form,
By beauty kindled, where enlivening ſenſe
And more than vulgar goodneſs ſeem to dwell,
Should be devoted to the rude embrace 240
Of ſome indecent clown! She looks, methinks,
Of old ACASTO's line; and to my mind
Recalls the patron of my happy life,
From whom my liberal fortune took its riſe

Now to the duſt gone down; his houſes, lands, 245
And once fair-ſpreading family, diſſolv'd.
'Tis ſaid that in ſome lone obſcure retreat,
Urg'd by remembrance ſad, and decent pride,
Far from thoſe ſcenes which knew their better days,
His aged widow and his daughter live, 250
Whom yet my fruitleſs ſearch could never find.
Romantic wiſh! would this the daughter were!"

When, ſtrict enquiring, from herſelf he found
She was the ſame, the daughter of his friend,
Of bountiful Acasto; who can ſpeak 255
The mingled paſſions that ſurpris'd his heart,
And thro' his nerves in ſhivering tranſport ran?
Then blaz'd his ſmother'd flame, avow'd, and bold;
And as he view'd her, ardent, o'er and o'er,
Love, gratitude, and pity wept at once. 260
Confus'd, and frighten'd at his ſudden tears,
Her riſing beauties flush'd a higher bloom,
As thus Palemon, paſſionate, and juſt,
Pour'd out the pious rapture of his ſoul.

"And art thou then Acasto's dear remains? 265
She, whom my reſtleſs gratitude has ſought,
So long in vain? O heavens! the very ſame,
The ſoften'd image of my noble friend,
Alive, his every look, his every feature,
More elegantly touch'd. Sweeter than Spring! 270

Thou ſole ſurviving bloſſom from the root
That nouriſh'd up my fortune! Say, ah where,
In what ſequeſter'd deſart, haſt thou drawn
The kindeſt aſpect of delighted HEAVEN?
Into ſuch beauty ſpread, and blown ſo fair; 275
Tho' poverty's cold wind, and cruſhing rain,
Beat keen, and heavy, on thy tender years?
O let me now, into a richer ſoil,
Tranſplant thee ſafe! where vernal ſuns, and ſhowers,
Diffuſe their warmeſt, largeſt influence; 280
And of my garden be the pride, and joy!
Ill it beſits thee, oh it ill beſits
ACASTO's daughter, his whoſe open ſtores,
Tho' vaſt, were little to his ampler heart,
The father of a country, thus to pick 285
The very refuſe of thoſe harveſt-fields,
Which from his bounteous friendſhip I enjoy.
Then throw that ſhameful pittance from thy hand,
But ill apply'd to ſuch a rugged taſk;
The fields, the maſter, all, my fair, are thine; 290
If to the various bleſſings which thy houſe
Has on me laviſh'd, thou wilt add that bliſs,
That deareſt bliſs, the power of bleſſing thee!"

HERE ceas'd the youth: yet ſtill his ſpeaking eye
Expreſs'd the ſacred triumph of his ſoul, 295
With conſcious virtue, gratitude, and love,
Above the vulgar joy divinely rais'd.

Nor waited he reply. Won by the charm
Of goodneſs irreſiſtible, and all
In ſweet diſorder loſt, ſhe bluſh'd conſent. 300
The news immediate to her mother brought;
While, pierc'd with anxious thought, ſhe pin'd away
The lonely moments for LAVINIA's fate;
Amaz'd, and ſcarce believing what ſhe heard,
Joy ſeiz'd her wither'd veins, and one bright gleam 305
Of ſetting life ſhone on her evening-hours:
Not leſs enraptur'd than the happy pair;
Who flouriſhed long in tender bliſs, and rear'd
A numerous offſpring, lovely like themſelves,
And good, the grace of all the country round. 310

DEFEATING oft the labours of the year,
The ſultry ſouth collects a potent blaſt.
At firſt, the groves are ſcarcely ſeen to ſtir
Their trembling tops; and a ſtill murmur runs
Along the ſoft inclining fields of corn. 315
But as the aerial tempeſt fuller ſwells,
And in one mighty ſtream, inviſible,
Immenſe, the whole excited atmoſphere,
Impetuous ruſhes o'er the ſounding world;
Strain'd to the root, the ſtooping foreſt pours 320
A ruſtling ſhower of yet untimely leaves.
High-beat, the circling mountains eddy in,
From the bare wild, the diſſipated ſtorm,
And ſend it in a torrent down the vale.

Expos'd, and naked, to its utmoſt rage, 325
Thro' all the ſea of harveſt rolling round,
The billowy plain floats wide; nor can evade,
Tho' pliant to the blaſt, its ſeizing force;
Or whirld in air, or into vacant chaff
Shook waſte. And ſometimes too a burſt of rain, 330
Swept from the black horizon, broad, deſcends
In one continuous flood. Still over-head
The mingling tempeſt weaves its gloom, and ſtill
The deluge deepens; till the fields around
Lie ſunk, and flatted, in the ſordid wave. 335
Sudden, the ditches ſwell; the meadows ſwim.
Red, from the hills, innumerable ſtreams
Tumultuous roar; and high above its banks
The river lift; before whoſe ruſhing tide,
Herds, flocks, and harveſts, cottages, and ſwains, 340
Roll mingled down; all that the winds had ſpar'd
In one wild moment ruin'd; the big hopes,
And well-earn'd treaſures of the painful year.
Fled to ſome eminence, the huſbandman
Helpleſs beholds the miſerable wreck 345
Driving along; his drowning ox at once
Deſcending, with his labours ſcatter'd round,
He ſees; and inſtant o'er his ſhivering thought
Comes winter unprovided, and a train
Of clamant children dear. Ye maſters, then, 350
Be mindful of the rough laborious hand,
That ſinks you ſoft in elegance and eaſe;

Be mindful of thoſe limbs in ruſſet clad;
Whoſe toil to yours is warmth, and graceful pride;
And oh be mindful of that ſparing board, 355
Which covers yours with luxury profuſe,
Makes your glaſs ſparkle, and your ſenſe rejoice!
Nor cruelly demand what the deep rains,
And all-involving winds have ſwept away.

HERE the rude clamour of the ſportſman's joy, 360
The gun faſt-thundering, and the winded horn,
Would tempt the Muſe to ſing the rural Game:
How, in his mid-career, the ſpaniel, ſtruck
Stiff, by the tainted gale, with open noſe,
Outſtretch'd, and finely ſenſible, draws full, 365
Fearful, and cautious, on the latent prey;
As in the ſun the circling covey baſk
Their varied plumes, and watchful every way,
Thro' the rough ſtubble turn the ſecret eye.
Caught in the meſhy ſnare, in vain they beat 370
Their idle wings, entangled more and more:
Nor on the ſurges of the boundleſs air,
Tho' borne triumphant, are they ſafe; the gun,
Glanc'd juſt, and ſudden, from the fowler's eye
O'ertakes their ſounding pinions; and again, 375
Immediate, brings them from the towering wing;
Dead to the ground; or drives them wide-diſpers'd,
Wounded, and wheeling various, down the wind.

THESE are not ſubjects for the peaceful Muſe,
Nor will ſhe ſtain with ſuch her ſpotleſs ſong; 380
Then moſt delighted, when ſhe ſocial ſees
The whole mix'd animal creation round,
Alive, and happy. 'Tis not joy to her,
This falſely-chearful barbarous game of death;
This rage of pleaſure, which the reſtleſs youth 385
Awakes, impatient, with the gleaming morn;
When beaſts of prey retire, that all night long,
Urg'd by neceſſity, had rang'd the dark,
As if their conſcious ravage ſhunn'd the light,
Aſham'd. Not ſo the ſteady tyrant Man, 390
Who with the thoughtleſs inſolence of power
Inflam'd, beyond the moſt infuriate wrath
Of the worſt monſter that e'er roam'd the waſte,
For ſport alone purſues the cruel chaſe,
Amid the beamings of the gentle days. 395
Upbraid, ye ravening tribes, our wanton rage,
For hunger kindles you, and lawleſs want;
But laviſh fed, in nature's bounty roll'd,
To joy at anguiſh, and delight in blood,
Is what your horrid boſoms never knew. 400

POOR is the triumph o'er the timid hare!
Scar'd from the corn, and now to ſome lone ſeat
Retir'd: the ruſhy fen; the ragged furze,
Stretch'd o'er the ſtony heath; the ſtubble chapt;
The thiſtly lawn; the thick-entangled broom; 405

Of the ſame friendly hue, the wither'd fern;
The fallow ground laid open to the ſun,
Concoctive; and the nodding ſandy bank,
Hung o'er the mazes of the mountain brook.
Vain is her beſt precaution; tho' ſhe ſits 410
Conceal'd, with folded ears; unſleeping eyes,
By Nature rais'd to take the horizon in;
And head couch'd cloſe betwixt her hairy feet,
In act to ſpring away. The ſcented dew
Betrays her early labyrinth: and deep, 415
In ſcatter'd ſullen openings, far behind,
With every breeze ſhe hears the coming ſtorm.
But nearer, and more frequent, as it loads
The ſighing gale, ſhe ſprings amaz'd, and all
The ſavage ſoul of game is up at once: 420
The pack full-opening, various; the ſhrill horn
Reſounded from the hills; the neighing ſteed,
Wild for the chaſe; and the loud hunter's ſhout;
O'er a weak, harmleſs, flying creature, all
Mix'd in mad tumult, and diſcordant joy. 425

The ſtag too, ſingled from the herd, where long
He rang'd the branching monarch of the ſhades,
Before the tempeſt drives. At firſt, in ſpeed,
He, ſprightly, puts his faith; and rous'd by fear,
Gives all his ſwift aerial ſoul to flight; 430
Againſt the breeze he darts, that way the more
To leave the leſſening murderous cry behind:

Deception ſhort! tho' fleeter than the winds
Blown o'er the keen air'd mountain by the north,
He burſts the thickets, glances thro' the glades, 435
And plunges deep into the wildeſt wood;
If ſlow, yet ſure, adheſive to the track
Hot-ſtreaming, up behind him come again
Th' inhuman rout, and from the ſhady depth
Expel him, circling thro' his every ſhift. 440
He ſweeps the foreſt oft; and ſobbing ſees
The glades, mild-opening to the golden day;
Where, in kind conteſt, with his butting friends
He wont to ſtruggle, or his loves enjoy.
Oft in the full-deſcending flood he tries 445
To loſe the ſcent, and lave his burning ſides;
Oft ſeeks the herd; the watchful herd, alarm'd,
With ſelfiſh care avoid a brother's woe.
What ſhall he do? His once ſo vivid nerves,
So full of buoyant ſpirit, now no more 450
Inſpire the courſe; but fainting breathleſs toil,
Sick, ſeizes on his heart: he ſtands at bay;
And puts his laſt weak refuge in deſpair.
The big round tears run down his dappled face;
He groans in anguiſh; while the growling pack, 455
Blood-happy, hang at his fair jutting cheſt,
And mark his beauteous checker'd ſides with gore.

Of this enough. But if the ſylvan youth,
Whoſe fervent blood boils into violence,

Muſt have the chaſe; behold, deſpiſing flight, 460
The rous'd-up lion, reſolute, and ſlow,
Advancing full on the protended ſpear,
And coward-band, that circling wheel aloof.
Slunk from the cavern, and the troubled wood,
See the grim wolf; on him his ſhaggy foe 465
Vindictive fix, and let the ruffian die:
Or, growling horrid, as the brindled boar
Grins fell deſtruction, to the monſter's heart
Let the dart lighten from the nervous arm.

THESE BRITAIN knows not; give, ye BRITONS, then,
Your ſportive fury, pitileſs, to pour 471
Looſe on the nightly robber of the fold;
Him, from his craggy winding haunts unearth'd,
Let all the thunder of the chaſe purſue.
Throw the broad ditch behind you; or the hedge 475
High bound, reſiſtleſs; nor the deep moraſs
Refuſe, but thro' the ſhaking wilderneſs
Pick your nice way; into the perilous flood
Bear fearleſs, of the raging inſtinct full;
And as you ride the torrent, to the banks 480
Your triumph ſound ſonorous, running round,
From rock to rock, in circling echoes toſs'd;
Then ſcale the mountains to their woody tops;
Ruſh down the dangerous ſteep; and o'er the lawn,
In fancy ſwallowing up the ſpace between, 485
Pour all your ſpeed into the rapid game.

For happy he! who tops the wheeling chase;
Has every maze evolv'd, and every guile
Disclos'd; who knows the merits of the pack;
Who saw the villain seiz'd, and dying hard 490
Without complaint, tho' by an hundred mouths
Relentless torn: O glorious he, beyond
His daring peers! when the retreating horn
Calls them to ghostly halls of gay renown,
With woodland honours grac'd: the fox's fur, 495
Depending decent from the roof; and spread
Round the drear walls, with antic figures fierce,
The stag's large front: he then is loudest heard,
When the night staggers with severer toils,
With feats Thessalian Centaurs never knew, 500
And their repeated wonders shake the dome.

But first the fuel'd chimney blazes wide;
The tankards foam; and the strong table groans
Beneath the smoking Sirloin, stretch'd immense
From side to side; in which, with desperate knife, 505
They deep incision make, and talk the while
Of England's glory, ne'er to be defac'd,
While hence they borrow vigour: or amain
Into the pasty plung'd, at intervals,
If stomach keen can intervals allow, 510
Relating all the glories of the chase.
Then sated Hunger bids his mother Thirst
Produce the mighty bowl; the mighty bowl,

Swell'd high with fiery juice, ſteams liberal round
A potent gale, delicious, as the breath 515
Of Maia to the love-ſick ſhepherdeſs,
On violets diffus'd, while ſoft ſhe hears
Her panting ſhepherd ſtealing to her arms.
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn,
Mature and perfect, from his dark retreat 520
Of thirty years; and now his honeſt front
Flames in the light refulgent, not afraid
Even with the vineyard's beſt produce to vie.
To cheat the thirſty moments, whiſt a while
Walks his dull round, beneath a cloud of ſmoke, 525
Wreath'd, fragrant, from the pipe; or the quick dice,
In thunder leaping from the box, awake
The ſounding gammon: while romp-loving Miſs
Is haul'd about, in gallantry robuſt.

At laſt theſe puling idleneſſes laid 530
Aſide, frequent and full, the dry divan
Cloſe in firm circle; and ſet, ardent, in
For ſerious drinking. Nor evaſion fly,
Nor ſober ſhift, is to the puking wretch
Indulg'd apart; but earneſt, brimming bowls, 535
Lave every ſoul, the table floating round,
And pavement, faithleſs to the fuddled foot.
Thus as they ſwim in mutual ſwill, the talk,
Vociferous at once from twenty tongues,
Reels faſt from theme to theme; from horſes, hounds,

To church or miſtreſs, politics or ghoſt; 541
In endleſs mazes, intricate, perplex'd.
Meantime, with ſudden interruption, loud,
Th' impatient catch burſts from the joyous heart;
That moment touch'd is every kindred ſoul; 545
And, opening in a full-mouth'd cry of joy,
The laugh, the ſlap, the jocund curſe go round;
While, from their ſlumbers ſhook, the kennel'd hound
Mix in the muſic of the day again.
As when the tempeſt, that has vex'd the deep 550
The dark night long, with fainter murmurs falls:
So gradual ſinks their mirth. Their feeble tongues,
Unable to take up the cumbrous word,
Lie quite diſſolv'd. Before their maudlin eyes,
Seen dim, and blue, the double tapers dance, 555
Like the ſun wading thro' the miſty ſky.
Then, ſliding ſoft, they drop. Confus'd above,
Glaſſes and bottles, pipes and gazetteers,
As if the table even itſelf was drunk,
Lie a wet broken ſcene; and wide, below, 560
Is heap'd the ſocial ſlaughter: where aſtride
The lubber Power in filthy triumph ſits,
Slumbrous, inclining ſtill from ſide to ſide,
And ſteeps them drench'd in potent ſleep till morn.
Perhaps ſome doctor, of tremendous paunch, 565
Awful and deep, a black abyſs of drink,
Outlives them all: and from his bury'd flock

Retiring, full of rumination ſad,
Laments the weakneſs of theſe latter times.

BUT if the rougher ſex by this fierce ſport 570
Is hurried wild, let not ſuch horrid joy
E'er ſtain the boſom of the BRITISH FAIR.
Far be the ſpirit of the chaſe from them!
Uncomely courage, unbeſeeming ſkill;
To ſpring the fence, to rein the prancing ſteed; 575
The cap, the whip, the maſculine attire,
In which they roughen to the ſenſe, and all
The winning ſoftneſs of their ſex is loſt.
In them 'tis graceful to diſſolve at woe;
With every motion, every word, to wave 580
Quick o'er the kindling cheek the ready bluſh;
And from the ſmalleſt violence to ſhrink
Unequal, then the loveliest in their fears;
And by this ſilent adulation, ſoft,
To their protection more engaging Man. 585
O may their eyes no miſerable ſight,
Save weeping lovers, ſee! a nobler game,
Thro' Love's enchanting wiles purſu'd, yet fled,
In chaſe ambiguous. May their tender limbs
Float in the looſe ſimplicity of dreſs! 590
And, faſhion'd all to harmony, alone
Know they to ſeize the captivated ſoul,
In rapture warbled from love-breathing lips;
To teach the lute to languiſh; with ſmooth ſtep,

Diſcloſing motion in its every charm, 595
To ſwim along, and ſwell the mazy dance;
To train the foilage o'er the ſnowy lawn;
To guide the pencil, turn the tuneful page;
To lend new flavour to the fruitful year,
And heighten Nature's dainties; in their race 600
To rear their graces into ſecond life;
To give Society its higheſt taſte;
Well-order'd Home, Man's beſt delight to make;
And by ſubmiſſive wiſdom, modeſt ſkill,
With every gentle care-eluding art, 605
To raiſe the virtues, animate the bliſs,
And ſweeten all the toils of human life:
This be the female dignity, and praiſe.

Ye ſwains now haſten to the hazel bank;
Where, down yon dale, the wildly-winding brook 610
Falls hoarſe from ſteep to ſteep. In cloſe array,
Fit for the thickets and the tangling ſhrub,
Ye virgins come. For you their lateſt ſong
The woodlands raiſe; the cluſtering nuts for you
The lover finds amid the ſecret ſhade; 615
And, where they burniſh on the top-moſt bough,
With active vigour cruſhes down the tree;
Or ſhakes them ripe from the reſigning huſk,
A gloſſy ſhower, and of an ardent brown,
As are the ringlets of Melinda's hair; 620
Melinda! form'd with every grace complete,

Yet these neglecting, above beauty wise,
And far transcending such a vulgar praise.

HENCE from the busy joy-resounding fields,
In chearful error, let us tread the maze 625
Of Autumn, unconfin'd; and taste, reviv'd,
The breath of orchard big with bending fruit.
Obedient to the breeze and beating ray,
From the deep-loaded bough a mellow shower
Incessant melts away. The juicy pear 630
Lies, in a soft profusion, scatter'd round.
A various sweetness swells the gentle race;
By Nature's all-refining hand prepar'd;
Of temper'd sun, and water, earth, and air,
In ever-changing composition mix'd. 635
Such, falling frequent thro' the chiller night,
The fragrant stores, the wide-projected heaps
Of apples, which the lusty-handed year,
Innumerous, o'er the blushing orchard shakes.
A various spirit, fresh, delicious, keen, 640
Dwells in their gelid pores; and, active, points
The piercing cyder for the thirsty tongue:
Thy native theme, and boon inspirer too,
PHILLIPS, Pomona's bard, the second thou
Who nobly durst, in rhyme-unfetter'd verse, 645
With BRITISH freedom sing the BRITISH song:
How, from Silurian vats, high-sparkling wines
Foam in transparent floods; some strong, to cheer

The wint'ry revels of the labouring hind;
And tasteful some, to cool the summer-hours. 650

In this glad season, while his sweetest beams
The sun sheds equal o'er the meeken'd day;
Oh lose me in the green delightful walks
Of, DODINGTON, thy seat, serene and plain;
Where simple Nature reigns; and every view, 655
Diffusive, spreads the pure Dorsetian downs,
In boundless prospect; yonder shagg'd with wood,
Here rich with harvest, and there white with flocks!
Meantime the grandeur of the lofty dome,
Far splendid, seizes on the ravish'd eye. 660
New beauties rise with each revolving day:
New columns swell; and still the fresh Spring finds
New plants to quicken, and new groves to green.
Full of thy genius all! the Muses' seat:
Where in the secret bower, and winding walk, 665
For virtuous YOUNG and thee they twine the bay.
Here wandering oft, fir'd with the restless thirst
Of thy applause, I solitary court
Th' inspiring breeze: and meditate the book
Of Nature ever open; aiming thence, 670
Warm from the heart, to learn the moral song.
Here, as I steal along the sunny wall,
Where Autumn basks, with fruit empurpled deep,
My pleasing theme continual prompts my thought:
Presents the downy peach; the shining plum; 675

The ruddy, fragrant nectarine; and dark,
Beneath his ample leaf, the luſcious fig.
The vine too here her curling tendrills ſhoots;
Hangs out her cluſters, glowing to the ſouth;
And ſcarcely wiſhes for a warmer ſky. 680

TURN we a moment Fancy's rapid flight
To vigorous ſoils, and climes of fair extent;
Where, by the potent ſun elated high,
The vineyard ſwells refulgent on the day;
Spreads o'er the vale; or up the mountain climbs, 685
Profuſe; and drinks amid the ſunny rocks,
From cliff to cliff increas'd, the heightened blaze.
Low bend the weighty boughs. The cluſters clear,
Half thro' the foliage ſeen, or ardent flame,
Or ſhine tranſparent; while perfection breathes 690
White o'er the turgent film the living dew.
As thus they brighten with exalted juice,
Touch'd into flavour by the mingling ray;
The rural youth and virgins o'er the field,
Each fond for each to cull th' autumnal prime, 695
Exulting rove, and ſpeak the vintage nigh.
Then comes the cruſhing ſwain; the country-floats,
And foams unbounded with the maſhy flood;
That by degrees fermented, and refin'd,
Round the rais'd nations pours the cup of joy: 700
The Claret ſmooth, red as the lip we preſs
In ſparkling fancy, while we drain the bowl;

The mellow tasted Burgundy; and quick,
As is the wit it gives, the gay Champaign.

Now, by the cool declining year condens'd, 705
Descend the copious exhalations, check'd
As up the middle sky unseen they stole,
And roll the doubling fogs around the hill.
No more the mountain, horrid, vast, sublime,
Who pours a sweep of rivers from his sides, 710
And high between contending kingdoms rears
The rocky long division, fills the view
With great variety; but in a night
Of gathering vapour, from the baffled sense
Sinks dark and dreary. Thence expanding far, 715
The huge dusk, gradual, swallows up the plain:
Vanish the woods; the dim-seen river seems
Sullen, and slow, to roll the misty wave.
Even in the height of noon oppreſt, the sun
Sheds weak, and blunt, his wide-refracted ray; 720
Whence glaring oft, with many a broaden'd orb,
He frights the nations. Indistinct on earth,
Seen thro' the turbid air, beyond the life
Objects appear; and, wilder'd, o'er the waste
The shepherd stalks gigantic. Till at last, 725
Wreath'd dun around, in deeper circles still
Successive closing, sits the general fog
Unbounded o'er the world; and, mingling thick,
A formless gray confusion covers all.

As when of old (ſo ſung the HEBREW BARD) 730
Light, uncollected, thro' the chaos urg'd
Its infant way; nor Order yet had drawn
His lovely train from out the dubious gloom.

THESE roving miſts, that conſtant now begin
To ſmoak along the hilly country, theſe 935
With weighty rains, and melted Alpine ſnows,
The mountain ciſterns fill, thoſe ample ſtores
Of water, ſcoop'd among the hollow rocks;
Whence guſh the ſtreams, the ceaſeleſs fountains play,
And their unfailing wealth the rivers draw. 740
Some ſages ſay, that where the numerous wave
For ever laſhes the reſounding ſhore,
Drill'd thro' the ſandy ſtratum, every way,
The waters with the ſandy ſtratum riſe;
Amid whoſe angles infinitely ſtrain'd, 745
They joyful leave their jaggy ſalts behind,
And clear and ſweeten, as they ſoak along.
Nor ſtops the reſtleſs fluid, mounting ſtill,
Though oft amidſt th' irriguous vale it ſprings;
But to the mountain courted by the ſand, 750
That leads it darkling on in faithful maze,
Far from the parent-main, it boils again
Freſh into day; and all the glittering hill
Is bright with ſpouting rills. But hence this vain
Amuſive dream! why ſhould the waters love 755
To take ſo far a journey to the hills,

When the ſweet valleys offer to their toil
Inviting quiet, and a nearer bed?
Or if, by blind ambition led aſtray,
They muſt aſpire; why ſhould they ſudden ſtop 760
Among the broken mountain's rushy dells,
And, ere they gain its higheſt peak, deſert
Th' attractive ſand that charm'd their courſe ſo long?
Beſides, the hard agglomerating ſalts,
The ſpoil of ages, would impervious choak 765
Their ſecret channels; or, by ſlow degrees,
High as the hills protrude the ſwelling vales:
Old Ocean too, ſuck'd thro' the porous globe,
Had long ere now forſook his horrid bed,
And brought Deucalion's wat'ry times again. 770

Say then, where lurk the vaſt eternal ſprings,
That, like Creating Nature, lie conceal'd
From mortal eye, yet with their laviſh ſtores
Refreſh the globe, and all its joyous tribes?
O thou pervading Genius, given to man, 775
To trace the ſecrets of the dark abyſs,
O lay the mountains bare! and wide diſplay
Their hidden ſtructure to th' aſtoniſh'd view!
Strip from the branching Alps their piny load;
The huge incumbrance of horrific woods 780
From Aſian Taurus, from Imaus ſtretch'd
Athwart the roving Tartars ſullen bounds!
Give opening Hemus to my ſearching eye,

And high Olympus pouring many a ſtream!
O from the ſounding ſummits of the north, 785
The Dofrine Hills, thro' Scandinavia roll'd
To fartheſt Lapland and the frozen main;
From lofty Caucaſus far ſeen by thoſe
Who in the Caſpian and black Euxine toil;
From cold Riphean Rocks, which the wild Ruſs 790
Believes the [a] ſtony girdle of the world;
And all the dreadful mountains, wrapt in ſtorm,
Whence wide Siberia draws her lonely floods;
O ſweep th' eternal ſnows! Hung o'er the deep,
That ever works beneath his ſounding baſe, 795
Bid Atlas, propping heaven, as Poets feign,
His ſubterranean wonders ſpread! unveil
The miny caverns, blazing on the day,
Of Abyſſinia's cloud-compelling cliffs,
And of the bending [b] Mountains of the Moon? 800
O'ertopping all theſe giant-ſons of earth,
Let the dire Andes, from the radiant Line
Stretch'd to the ſtormy ſeas that thunder round
The ſouthern pole, their hideous deeps unfold!
Amazing ſcene! Behold! the glooms diſcloſe, 805
I ſee the rivers in their infant beds!
Deep, deep I hear them, labouring to get free!
I ſee the leaning ſtrata, artful rang'd;
The gaping fiſſures, to receive the rains,
The melting ſnows, and ever-dripping fogs. 810
Strow'd bibulous above, I ſee the ſands,

The pebbly gravel next, the layers then
Of mingled moulds, of more retentive earths,
The gutter'd rocks, and mazy-running clefts;
That, while the ſtealing moiſture they tranſmit, 815
Retard its motion, and forbid its waſte.
Beneath th' inceſſant weeping of theſe drains,
I ſee the rocky Siphons ſtretch'd immenſe,
The mighty reſervoirs, of harden'd chalk,
Or ſtiff compacted clay, capacious form'd. 820
O'erflowing thence, the congregated ſtores,
The cryſtal treaſures of the liquid world,
Thro' the ſtirr'd ſands a bubbling paſſage burſt;
And welling out, around the middle ſteep,
Or from the bottoms of the boſom'd hills, 825
In pure effuſion flow. United, thus,
Th' exhaling ſun, the vapour-burden'd air,
The gelid mountains, that to rain condens'd
Theſe vapours in continual current draw,
And ſend them, o'er the fair-divided earth, 830
In bounteous rivers to the deep again,
A ſocial commerce hold, and firm ſupport
The full-adjuſted harmony of things.

When Autumn ſcatters his departing gleams,
Warn'd of approaching Winter, gathered, play 835
The ſwallow-people; and toſs'd wide around,
O'er the calm ſky, in convolution ſwift,
The feathered eddy floats: rejoicing once,

Ere to their wintry ſlumbers they retire;
In cluſters clung, beneath the mould'ring bank, 840
And where unpierc'd by froſt, the cavern ſweats.
Or rather into warmer climes convey'd,
With other kindred birds of ſeaſon, there
They twitter chearful, till the vernal months
Invite them welcome back: for, thronging, now 845
Innumerous wings are in commotion all.

Where the Rhine loſes his majeſtic force
In Belgian plains, won from the raging deep,
By diligence amazing, and the ſtrong
Unconquerable hand of Liberty, 850
The ſtork-aſſembly meets; for many a day,
Conſulting deep, and various, ere they take
Their arduous voyage thro' the liquid ſky.
And now their rout deſign'd, their leaders choſe,
Their tribes adjuſted, clean'd their vigorous wings;
And many a circle, many a ſhort eſſay, 856
Wheel'd round and round, in congregation full
The figur'd flight aſcends; and riding high
The aerial billows, mixes with the clouds.

Or where the Northern ocean, in vaſt whirls, 860
Boils round the naked melancholy iſles
Of fartheſt Thule, and the Atlantic ſurge
Pours in among the ſtormy Hebrides;
Who can recount what tranſmigrations there

Are annual made? what nations come and go? 865
And how the living clouds on clouds arise?
Infinite wings! till all the plume-dark air,
And rude-resounding shore are one wild cry,

HERE the plain harmless native his small flock,
And herd diminutive of many hues, 870
Tends on the little island's verdant swell,
The shepherd's sea-girt reign; or, to the rocks,
Dire-clinging, gathers his ovarious food;
Or sweeps the fishy shore; or treasures up
The plumage, rising full, to form the bed 875
Of luxury. And here a while the Muse,
High-hovering o'er the broad cerulean scene,
Sees CALEDONIA, in romantic view:
Her airy mountains, from the waving main,
Invested with a keen diffusive sky. 880
Breathing the soul acute; her forests huge,
Incult, robust, and tall, by Nature's hand
Planted of old; her azure lakes between,
Pour'd out extensive, and of wat'ry wealth
Full; winding deep, and green, her fertile vales; 885
With many a cool translucent brimming flood
Wash'd lovely, from the Tweed (pure parent stream,
Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed,
With, sylvan Jed, thy tributary brook)
To where the north-inflated tempest foams 890
O'er Orca's or Betubium's highest peak:

Nurſe of a people, in misfortune's ſchool
Train'd up to hardy deeds! ſoon viſited
By Learning, when before the Gothic rage
She took her weſtern flight. A manly race,
Of unſubmitting ſpirit, wiſe and brave;
Who ſtill thro' bleeding ages ſtruggled hard,
(As well unhappy WALLACE can atteſt,
Great patriot-hero! ill-requited chief!)
To hold a generous undiminiſh'd ſtate;
Too much in vain! Hence of unequal bounds
Impatient, and by tempting glory borne
O'er every land, for every land their life
Has flow'd profuſe, their piercing genius plann'd,
And ſwell'd the pomp of peace their faithful toil.
As from their own clear north, in radiant ſtreams,
Bright over Europe burſts the Boreal Morn.

OH is there not ſome patriot, in whoſe power
That beſt, that godlike Luxury is plac'd,
Of bleſſing thouſands, thouſands yet unborn,
Thro' late poſterity? ſome, large of ſoul,
To chear dejected induſtry? to give
A double harveſt to the pining ſwain?
And teach the lab'ring hand the ſweets of toil?
How, by the fineſt art, the native robe
To weave; how, white as hyperborean ſnow,
To form the lucid lawn; with venturous oar
How to daſh wide the billow; nor look on,

Shamefully paſſive, while Batavian fleets
Defraud us of the glittering finny ſwarm, 920
That heave our friths, and croud upon our ſhores;
How all-enlivening trade to rouſe, and wing
The proſperous ſail, from every growing port,
Uninjur'd, round the ſea-incircled globe;
And thus in ſoul united as in name, 925
Did BRITAIN reign the miſtreſs of the deep?

YES, there are ſuch. And full on thee, ARGYLE,
Her hope, her ſtay, her darling, and her boaſt,
From her firſt patriots and her heroes ſprung,
Thy fond imploring country turns her eye; 930
In thee, with all a mothers's triumph, ſees
Her every virtue, every grace combin'd,
Her genius, wiſdom, her engaging turn,
Her pride of honour, and her courage try'd,
Calm, and intrepid, in the very throat 935
Of ſulphurous war, on Tenier's dreadful field.
Nor leſs the palm of peace inwreathes thy brow:
For, powerful as thy ſword, from thy rich tongue
Perſuaſion flows, and wins the high debate;
While mix'd in thee combine the charm of youth, 940
The force of manhood, and the depth of age.
Thee, FORBES, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth ſincere, as weeping friendſhip kind,
Thee, truly generous, and ſilence great,
Thy country feels thro' her reviving arts, 945

Plann'd by thy wiſdom, by thy ſoul inform'd;
And ſeldom has ſhe known a friend like thee.

BUT ſee the fading many-colour'd woods,
Shade deepening over ſhade, the country round
Imbrown; a crowded umbrage, duſk, and dun, 950
Of every hue, from wan declining green
To ſooty dark. Theſe now the loneſome Muſe,
Low-whiſpering, lead into their leaf-ſtrown walks,
And give the ſeaſon in its lateſt view.

MEANTIME, light-ſhadowing all, a ſober calm 955
Fleeces unbounded ether; whoſe leaſt wave
Stands tremulous, uncertain where to turn
The gentle current: while illumin'd wide,
The dewy-ſkirted clouds imbibe the ſun,
And thro' their lucid veil his ſoften'd force 960
Shed o'er the peaceful world. Then is the time,
For thoſe whom wiſdom and whom Nature charm,
To ſteal themſelves from the degenerate crowd,
And ſoar above this little ſcene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet; 965
To ſooth the throbbing paſſions into peace;
And woo lone Quiet in her ſilent walks.

THUS ſolitary, and in penſive guiſe,
Oft let me wander o'er the ruſſet mead,
And thro' the ſadden'd grove, where ſcarce is heard

One dying ſtrain, to chear the woodman's toil. 970
Haply ſome widow'd ſongſter pours his plaint,
Far, in faint warblings, thro' the tawny copſe.
While congregated thruſhes, linnets, larks,
And each wild throat, whoſe artleſs ſtrains ſo late 975
Swell'd all the muſic of the ſwarming ſhades,
Robb'd of their tuneful ſouls, now ſhivering ſit
On the dead tree, a dull deſpondent flock;
With not a brightneſs waving o'er their plumes,
And nought ſave chattering diſcord in their note. 980
O let not, aim'd from ſome inhuman eye,
The gun the muſic of the coming year
Deſtroy; and harmleſs, unſuſpecting harm,
Lay the weak tribes, a miſerable prey,
In mingled murder, fluttering on the ground! 985

The pale deſcending year, yet pleaſing ſtill,
A gentler mood inſpires; for now the leaf
Inceſſant ruſtles from the mournful grove;
Oft ſtartling ſuch, as ſtudious, walk below,
And ſlowly circles thro' the waving air. 990
But ſhould a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob, o'er the ſky the leafy deluge ſtreams;
Till choak'd, and matted with the dreary ſhower,
The foreſt-walks, at every riſing gale,
Roll wide the wither'd waſte, and whiſtle bleak. 995
Fled is the blaſted verdure of the fields;
And, ſhrunk into their beds, the flow'ry race

Their ſunny robes reſign. Even what remain'd
Of ſtronger fruits, falls from the naked tree;
And woods, fields, gardens, orchards, all around 1000
The deſolated proſpect thrills the ſoul.

He comes! he comes! in every breeze the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes!
His near approach, the ſudden-ſtarting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air, 1005
The ſoftened feature, and the beating heart,
Pierc'd deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the ſoul his ſacred influence breathes!
Inflames imagination; thro' the breaſt
Infuſes every tenderneſs; and far 1010
Beyond dim earth exalts the ſwelling thought.
Ten thouſand thouſand fleet ideas, ſuch
As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
Crowd faſt into the mind's creative eye.
As faſt the correſpondent paſſions riſe, 1015
As varied, and as high; Devotion rais'd
To rapture, and divine aſtoniſhment;
The love of Nature unconfin'd, and, chief,
Of human race; the large ambitious wiſh,
To make them bleſt; the ſigh for ſuffering worth 1020
Loſt in obſcurity; the noble ſcorn
Of tyrant-pride; the fearleſs great reſolve;
The wonder which the dying patriot draws,
Inſpiring glory thro' remoteſt time;

Th' awaken'd throb for virtue, and for fame; 1025
The ſympathies of love, and friendſhip dear;
With all the ſocial offſpring of the heart.

Oh bear me then to vaſt embowering ſhades,
To twilight groves, and viſionary vales;
To weeping grottoes, and prophetic glooms; 1030
Where angel-forms athwart the ſolemn duſk,
Tremendous ſweep, or ſeem to ſweep along;
And voices more than human, thro' the void
Deep-ſounding, ſeize th' enthuſiaſtic ear!

Or is this gloom too much? Then lead, ye powers,
That o'er the garden and the rural ſeat 1036
Preſide, which ſhining thro' the chearful land
In countleſs numbers bleſt Britannia ſees;
O lead me to the wide-extended walks,
The fair majeſtic paradiſe of Stowe! [c] 1040
Not Perſian Cyrus on Ionia's ſhore
E'er ſaw ſuch ſylvan ſcenes; ſuch various art
By genius fir'd, ſuch ardent genius tam'd
By cool judicious art; that, in the ſtrife,
All-beauteous Nature fears to be outdone. 1045
And there, O Pitt, thy country's early boaſt,
There let me ſit beneath the ſhelter'd ſlopes,
Or in that [d] Temple where, in future times,
Thou well ſhalt merit a diſtinguiſh'd name;
And, with thy converſe bleſt, catch the laſt ſmiles 1050

Of Autumn beaming o'er the yellow woods.
While there with thee th' inchanted round I walk,
The regulated wild, gay Fancy then
Will tread in thought the groves of Attic Land;
Will from thy ſtandard taſte refine her own, 1055
Correct her pencil to the pureſt truth
Of nature, or, the unimpaſſion'd ſhades
Forſaking, raiſe it to the human mind.
Or if hereafter ſhe, with juſter hand,
Shall draw the tragic ſcene, inſtruct her thou, 1060
To mark the varied movements of the heart,
What every decent character requires,
And every paſſion ſpeaks: O thro' her ſtrain
Breathe thy pathetic eloquence! that moulds
Th' attentive ſenate, charms, perſuades, exalts, 1065
Of honeſt zeal th' indignant lightning throws,
And ſhakes corruption on her venal throne.
While thus we talk, and thro' Elyſian vales
Delighted rove, perhaps a ſigh eſcapes:
What pity, COBHAM, thou thy verdant files 1070
Of order'd trees ſhouldſt here inglorious range,
Inſtead of ſquadrons flaming o'er the field,
And long embattled hoſts! when the proud foe,
The faithleſs vain diſturber of mankind,
Inſulting Gaul, has rous'd the world to war; 1075
When keen, once more, within their bounds to preſs
Thoſe poliſh'd robbers, thoſe ambitious ſlaves,

The British Youth would hail thy wiſe command,
Thy temper'd ardour, and thy veteran ſkill.

The weſtern ſun withdraws the ſhorten'd day; 1080
And humid evening, gliding o'er the ſky,
In her chill progreſs, to the ground condens'd
The vapours throw. Where creeping waters ooze,
Where marſhes ſtagnate, and where rivers wind,
Cluſter the rolling fogs, and ſwim along 1085
The duſky mantled lawn. Mean-while the moon
Full-orb'd, and breaking thro' the ſcatter'd clouds,
Shews her broad viſage in the crimſon'd eaſt.
Turn'd to the ſun direct, her ſpotted diſk,
Where mountains riſe, umbrageous dales deſcend 1090
And caverns deep, as optic tube deſcries,
A ſmaller earth, gives us his blaze again,
Void of its flame, and ſheds a ſofter day.
Now thro' the paſſing cloud ſhe ſeems to ſtoop,
Now up the pure cerulean rides ſublime. 1095
Wide the pale deluge floats, and ſtreaming mild
O'er the ſky'd mountain to the ſhadowy vale,
While rocks and floods reflect the quivering gleam,
The whole air whitens with a boundleſs tide
Of ſilver radiance, trembling round the world. 1100

But when half blotted from the ſky her light,
Fainting, permits the ſtarry fires to burn
With keener luſtre thro' the depth of heaven;

Or near extinct her deaden'd orb appears,
And ſcarce appears, of ſickly beamleſs white; 1105
Oft in this ſeaſon, ſilent from the north
A blaze of meteors ſhoots: enſweeping firſt
The lower ſkies, they all at once converge
High to the crown of heaven, and all at once
Relapſing quick, as quickly re-aſcend, 1110
And mix, and thwart, extinguiſh, and renew,
All ether courſing in a maze of light.

From look to look, contagious thro' the crowd,
The panic runs, and into wondrous ſhapes
The appearance throws: Armies in meet array, 1115
Throng'd with aerial ſpears, and ſteeds of fire;
Till the long lines of full-extended war
In bleeding fight commix'd, the ſanguine flood
Rolls a broad ſlaughter o'er the plains of heaven.
As thus they ſcan the viſionary ſcene, 1120
On all ſides ſwells the ſuperſtitious din,
Incontinent; and buſy frenzy talks
Of blood and battle; cities overturn'd;
And late at night in ſwallowing earthquake ſunk,
Or hideous wrapt in fierce aſcending flame; 1125
Of fallow famine, inundation, ſtorm;
Of peſtilence, and every great diſtreſs;
Empires ſubvers'd, when ruling fate has ſtruck
Th' unalterable hour: even Nature's ſelf
Is deem'd to totter on the brink of time. 1130

Not ſo the Man of philoſophic eye,
And inſpect ſage; the waving brightneſs he
Curious ſurveys, inquiſitive to know
The cauſes, and materials, yet unfix'd,
Of this appearance beautiful, and new. 1135

Now black, and deep, the night begins to fall,
A ſhade immenſe. Sunk in the quenching gloom,
Magnificent and vaſt, are heaven and earth.
Order confounded lies; all beauty void;
Diſtinction loſt; and gay variety 1140
One univerſal blot: ſuch the fair power
Of light, to kindle and create the whole.
Drear is the ſtate of the benighted wretch,
Who then, bewilder'd, wanders thro' the dark,
Full of pale fancies, and chimeras huge; 1145
Nor viſited by one directive ray,
From cottage ſtreaming, or from airy hall.
Perhaps impatient as he ſtumbles on,
Struck from the root of ſlimy ruſhes, blue,
The wild-fire ſcatters round, or gather'd trails 1150
A length of flame deceitful o'er the moſs:
Whither decoy'd by the fantaſtic blaze,
Now loſt and now renew'd, he ſinks abſorpt,
Rider and horſe, amid the miry gulph:
While ſtill, from day to day, his pining wife, 1155
And plaintive children his return await,
In wild conjecture loſt. At other times,

Sent by the better Genius of the night,
Innoxious, gleaming on the horſe's mane,
The meteor ſits; and ſhews the narrow path, 1160
That winding leads thro' pits of death, or elſe
Inſtructs him how to take the dangerous ford.

The lengthen'd night elaps'd, the morning ſhines
Serene, in all her dewy beauty bright,
Unfolding fair the laſt autumnal day. 1165
And now the mounting ſun diſpells the fog;
The rigid hoar-froſt melts before his beam;
And hung on every ſpray, on every blade
Of graſs, the myriad dew-drops twinkle round.

Ah! ſee where robb'd, and murder'd, in that pit
Lies the ſtill heaving hive! at evening ſnatch'd, 1171
Beneath the cloud of guilt-concealing night,
And fix'd o'er ſulphur: while, not dreaming ill,
The happy people, in their waxen cells,
Sat tending public cares, and planning ſchemes 1175
Of temperance, for Winter poor; rejoiced
To mark, full flowing round, their copious ſtores.
Sudden the dark oppreſſive ſteam aſcends;
And, us'd to milder ſcents, the tender race,
By thouſands, tumble from their honey'd domes, 1180
Convolv'd, and agonizing in the duſt.
And was it then for this you roam'd the Spring,
Intent from flower to flower? for this you toil'd

Ceaſeleſs the burning Summer-heats away?
For this in Autumn ſearch'd the blooming waſte, 1185
Nor loſt one ſunny gleam? for this ſad fate?
O man! tyrannic lord! how long, how long,
Shall proſtrate Nature groan beneath your rage,
Awaiting renovation? When oblig'd,
Muſt you deſtroy? Of their ambroſial food 1190
Can you not borrow; and, in juſt return,
Afford them ſhelter from the wint'ry winds;
Or, as the ſharp year pinches, with their own
Again regale them on ſome ſmiling day?
See where the ſtony bottom of their town 1195
Looks deſolate, and wild; with here and there
A helpleſs number, who the ruin'd ſtate
Survive, lamenting weak, caſt out to death.
Thus a proud city, populous and rich,
Full of the works of peace, and high in joy, 1200
At theatre or feaſt, or ſunk in ſleep,
(As late, Palermo, was thy fate) is ſeiz'd
By ſome dread earthquake, and convulſive hurl'd
Sheer from the black foundation, ſtench-involv'd,
Into a gulph of blue ſulphureous flame. 1205

Hence every harſher ſight! for now the day,
O'er heav'n and earth diffus'd, grows warm, and high,
Infinite ſplendor! wide inveſting all.
How ſtill the breeze! ſave what the filmy threads
Of dew evaporate bruſhes from the plain. 1210

How clear the cloudleſs ſky! how deeply ting'd
With a peculiar blue! the ethereal arch
How ſwell'd immenſe! amid whoſe azure thron'd
The radiant ſun how gay! how calm below
The gilded earth! the harveſt-treaſures all 1215
Now gather'd in, beyond the rage of ſtorms,
Sure to the ſwain; the circling fence ſhut up;
And inſtant Winter's utmoſt rage defy'd.
While, looſe to feſtive joy, the country round
Laughs with the loud ſincerity of mirth, 1220
Shook to the wind their cares. The toil-ſtrung youth
By the quick ſenſe of muſic taught alone,
Leaps wildly graceful in the lively dance.
Her every charm abroad, the village-toaſt,
Young, buxom, warm, in native beauty rich, 1225
Darts not unmeaning looks; and, where her eye
Points an approving ſmile, with double force,
The cudgel rattles, and the wreſtler twines.
Age too ſhines out; and, garrulous, recounts
The feats of youth. Thus they rejoice; nor think
That, with to-morrow's ſun, their annual toil 1231
Begins again the never-ceaſing round.

Oh knew he but his happineſs, of men
The happieſt he! who far from public rage,
Deep in the vale, with a Choice Few retir'd, 1235
Drinks the pure pleaſures of the Rural Life.
What tho' the dome be wanting, whoſe proud gate,

Each morning, vomits out the ſneaking crowd
Of flatterers falſe, and in their turn abus'd?
Vile intercourſe! What tho' the glittering robe, 1240
Of every hue reflected light can give,
Or floating looſe, or ſtiff with mazy gold,
The pride and gaze of fools! oppreſs him not?
What tho', from utmoſt land and ſea purvey'd,
For him each rarer tributary life 1245
Bleeds not, and his inſatiate table heaps
With luxury, and death? What tho' his bowl
Flames not with coſtly juice; nor ſunk in beds,
Oft of gay care, he toſſes out the night,
Or melts the thoughtleſs hours in idle ſtate? 1250
What tho' he knows not thoſe fantaſtic joys,
That ſtill amuſe the wanton, ſtill deceive;
A face of pleaſure, but a heart of pain;
Their hollow moments undelighted all?
Sure peace is his; a ſolid life, eſtrang'd 1255
To diſappointment, and fallacious hope:
Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich,
In herbs and fruits; whatever greens the Spring,
When heaven deſcends in ſhowers; or bends the bough
When Summer reddens, and when Autumn beams;
Or in the wint'ry glebe whatever lies 1261
Conceal'd, and fattens with the richeſt ſap:
Theſe are not wanting; nor the milky drove,
Luxuriant, ſpread o'er all the lowing vale;
Nor bleating mountains, nor the chide of ſtreams, 1265

And hum of bees, inviting ſleep ſincere
Into the guiltleſs breaſt, beneath the ſhade,
Or thrown at large amid the fragrant hay;
Nor ought beſides of proſpect, grove, or ſong,
Dim grottoes, gleaming lakes, and fountain clear. 1270
Here too dwells ſimple truth; plain innocence;
Unſullied beauty; ſound unbroken youth,
Patient of labour, with a little pleas'd;
Health ever blooming; unambitious toil;
Calm contemplation, and poetic eaſe; 1275

Let others brave the flood in queſt of gain,
And beat, for joyleſs months, the gloomy wave.
Let ſuch as deem it glory to deſtroy,
Ruſh into blood, the ſack of cities ſeek;
Unpierc'd, exulting in the widow's wail, 1280
The virgin's ſhriek, and infant's trembling cry.
Let ſome, far-diſtant from their native ſoil,
Urg'd on by want or harden'd avarice,
Find other lands beneath another ſun.
Let this thro' cities work his eager way, 1285
By legal outrage and eſtabliſh'd guile,
The ſocial ſenſe extinct; and that ferment
Mad into tumult the ſeditious herd,
Or melt them down to ſlavery. Let theſe
Inſnare the wretched in the toils of law, 1290
Fomenting diſcord, and perplexing right,
An iron race! and thoſe of fairer front,

But equal inhumanity, in courts,
Deluſive pomp, and dark cabals, delight;
Wreathe the deep bow, diffuſe the lying ſmile, 1295
And tread the weary labyrinth of ſtate.
While he, from all the ſtormy paſſions free
That reſtleſs men involve, hears, and but hears,
At diſtance ſafe, the human tempeſt roar,
Wrapt cloſe in conſcious peace. The fall of kings,
The rage of nations, and the cruſh of ſtates, 1301
Move not the Man, who, from the world eſcap'd
In ſtill retreats, and flowery ſolitudes,
To Nature's voice attends, from month to month,
And day to day, thro' the revolving year; 1305
Admiring, ſees her in her every ſhape;
Feels all her ſweet emotions at his heart;
Takes what ſhe liberal gives, nor thinks of more.
He, when young Spring protrudes the burſting gems,
Marks the firſt bud, and ſucks the healthful gale 1310
Into his freſhen'd ſoul; her genial hours
He full enjoys; and not a beauty blows,
And not an opening bloſſom breathes in vain.
In Summer he, beneath the living ſhade,
Such as o'er frigid Tempe wont to wave, 1315
Or Hemus cool, reads what the Muſe, of theſe
Perhaps, has in immortal numbers ſung;
Or what ſhe dictates writes: and, oft an eye
Shot round, rejoices in the vigorous year.
When Autumn's yellow luſtre gilds the world, 1320

And tempts the fickled ſwain into the field,
Seiz'd by the gen'ral joy, his heart diſtends
With gentle throws; and, thro' the tepid gleams
Deep muſing, then he beſt exerts his ſong.
Even Winter wild to him is full of bliſs, 1325
The mighty tempeſt, and the hoary waſte,
Abrupt, and deep, ſtretch'd o'er the buried earth,
Awake to ſolemn thought. At night the ſkies,
Diſclos'd, and kindled, by refining froſt,
Pour every luſtre on th' exalted eye. 1330
A friend, a book, the ſtealing hours ſecure,
And mark them down for wiſdom. With ſwift wing,
O'er land and ſea imagination roams;
Or truth, divinely breaking on his mind,
Elates his being, and unfolds his powers; 1335
Or in his breaſt heroic virtue burns.
The touch of kindred too and love he feels;
The modeſt eye, whoſe beams on his alone
Ecſtatic ſhine; the little ſtrong embrace
Of prattling children, twin'd around his neck, 1340
And emulous to pleaſe him, calling forth
The fond parental ſoul. Nor purpoſe gay,
Amuſement, dance, or ſong, he ſternly ſcorns;
For happineſs and true philoſophy
Are of the ſocial ſtill, and ſmiling kind. 1345
This is the life which thoſe who fret in guilt,
And guilty cities, never knew; the life,

Led by primeval ages, uncorrupt,
When angels dwelt, and God himſelf, with Man!

OH NATURE! all-ſufficient! over all! 1350
Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works!
Snatch me to heaven; thy rolling wonders there,
World beyond world, in infinite extent,
Profuſely ſcatter'd o'er the blue immenſe,
Shew me; their motions, periods, and their laws,
Give me to ſcan; thro' the diſcloſing deep 1356
Light my blind way: the mineral Strata there;
Thruſt, blooming, thence the vegetable world;
O'er that the riſing ſyſtem more complex,
Of animals; and higher ſtill, the mind, 1360
The varied ſcene of quick-compounded thought,
And where the mixing paſſions endleſs ſhift;
Theſe ever open to my raviſh'd eye;
A ſearch, the flight of time can ne'er exhauſt!
But if to that unequal; if the blood, 1365
In ſluggiſh ſtreams about my heart, forbid
That beſt ambition; under cloſing ſhades,
Inglorious, lay me by the lowly brook,
And whiſper to my dreams. From THEE begin,
Dwell all on THEE, with THEE conclude my ſong;
And let me never, never ſtray from THEE! 1370

THE SEASONS.

WINTER.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE ſubject propoſed.—Addreſs to the Earl of WILMINGTON.—Firſt approach of Winter.—According to the natural courſe of the ſeaſon, various ſtorms deſcribed.—Rain.—Wind.—Snow.—The driving of the ſnows: A man periſhing among them; whence reflections on the wants and miſeries of human life.—The wolves deſcending from the Alps and Apennines.—A winter-evening deſcribed; as ſpent by philoſophers; by the country people; in the city.—Froſt.—A view of Winter within the Polar Circle.—A thaw.—The whole concluding with moral reflections on a future ſtate.

SEE, WINTER comes, to rule the varied year,
Sullen and ſad, with all his riſing train;
Vapours, and Clouds, and Storms. Be theſe my theme,
Theſe! that exalt the ſoul to ſolemn thought,
And heavenly muſing. Welcome, kindred glooms! 5
Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
Pleas'd have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
When nurs'd by careleſs ſolitude I liv'd,

And ſung of Nature with unceaſing joy,
Pleas'd have I wander'd thro' your rough domain; 10
Trod the pure virgin-ſnows, myſelf as pure;
Heard the winds roar, and the big torrent burſt;
Or ſeen the deep fermenting tempeſt brew'd,
In the grim evening ſky. Thus paſs'd the time,
Till thro' the lucid chambers of the ſouth 15
Look'd out the joyous SPRING, look'd out, and ſmil'd.

To thee, the patron of her firſt eſſay,
The Muſe, O WILMINGTON! renews her ſong.
Since has ſhe rounded the revolving year:
Skimm'd the gay Spring; on eagle pinions borne, 20
Attempted thro' the Summer-blaze to riſe;
Then ſwept o'er Autumn with the ſhadowy gale;
And now among the wint'ry clouds again,
Roll'd in the doubling ſtorm, ſhe tries to ſoar;
To ſwell her note with all the ruſhing winds; 25
To ſuit her ſounding cadence to the floods;
As is her theme, her numbers wildly great:
Thrice happy! could ſhe fill thy judging ear
With bold deſcription, and with manly thought.
Nor art thou ſkill'd in awful ſchemes alone, 30
And how to make a mighty people thrive:
But equal goodneſs, ſound integrity,
A firm unſhaken uncorrupted ſoul
Amid a ſliding age, and burning ſtrong,
Not vainly blazing for the country's weal, 35

A ſteady ſpirit regularly free;
Theſe, each exalting each, the ſtateſman light
Into the patriot; theſe, the public hope
And eye to thee converting, bid the Muſe
Record what envy dares not flattery call. 40

Now when the cheerleſs empire of the ſky
To Capricorn the Centaur-Archer yields,
And fierce Aquarius, ſtains th' inverted year;
Hung o'er the fartheſt verge, of heaven, the ſun
Scarce ſpreads thro' ether the dejected day. 45
Faint are his gleams, and ineffectual ſhoot
His ſtruggling rays, in horizontal lines,
Thro' the thick air; as cloath'd in cloudy ſtorm,
Weak, wan, and broad, he ſkirts the ſouthern ſky;
And, ſoon deſcending, to the long dark night, 50
Wide-ſhading all, the proſtrate world reſigns.
Nor is the night unwiſh'd; while vital heat,
Light, life, and joy, the dubious day forſake.
Meantime, in ſable cincture, ſhadows vaſt,
Deep-ting'd and damp, and congregated clouds 55
And all the vapoury turbulence of heaven,
Involve the face of things. Thus Winter falls,
A heavy gloom oppreſſive o'er the world,
Thro' Nature ſhedding influence malign,
And rouſes up the ſeeds of dark diſeaſe. 60
The ſoul of Man dies in him, loathing life,
And black with more than melancholy views.

The cattle droop; and o'er the furrow'd land
Freſh from the plough, the dun-diſcolour'd flocks,
Untended ſpreading, crop the wholeſome root. 65
Along the woods, along the mooriſh fens,
Sighs the ſad Genius of the coming ſtorm;
And up among the looſe disjointed cliffs,
And fractur'd mountains wild, the brawling brook
And cave, preſageful, ſend a hollow moan 70
Reſounding long in liſtening Fancy's ear.

THEN comes the father of the tempeſt forth,
Wrapt in black glooms. Firſt joyleſs rains obſcure
Drive thro' the mingling ſkies with vapour foul;
Daſh on the mountain's brow, and ſhake the woods, 75
That grumbling wave below. The unſightly plain
Lies a brown deluge; as the low-bent clouds
Pour flood on flood, yet unexhauſted ſtill
Combine, and deepening into night ſhut up
The day's fair face. The wanderers of heaven, 80
Each to his home, retire; ſave thoſe that love
To take their paſtime in the troubled air,
Or ſkimming flutter round the dimply pool.
The cattle from the untaſted fields return,
And aſk, with meaning low, their wonted ſtalls, 85
Or ruminate in the contiguous ſhade.
Thither the houſehold feathery people crowd,
The creſted cock, with all his female train,
Penſive, and dripping; while the cottage-hind

Hangs o'er th' enlivening blaze, and taleful there 90
Recounts his ſimple frolic: much he talks,
And much he laughs, nor recks the ſtorm that blows
Without, and rattles on his humble roof.

WIDE o'er the brim, with many a torrent ſwell'd,
And the mix'd ruin of its banks o'erſpread, 96
At laſt the rous'd-up river pours along:
Reſiſtleſs, roaring, dreadful, down it comes,
From the rude mountain, and the moſſy wild,
Tumbling, thro' rocks abrupt, and ſounding far;
Then o'er the ſanded valley floating ſpreads, 100
Calm ſluggiſh, ſilent; till again, conſtrain'd
Between two meeting hills, it burſts away,
Where rocks and woods o'erhang the turbid ſtream;
There gathering triple force, rapid, and deep, 104
It boils, and wheels, and foams, and thunders through.

NATURE! great Parent! whoſe unceaſing hand,
Rolls round the Seaſons of the changeful year,
How mighty, how majeſtic, are thy works!
With what a pleaſing dread they ſwell the ſoul!
That ſees aſtoniſh'd! and aſtoniſh'd ſings! 110
Ye too, ye winds! that now begin to blow,
With boiſterous ſweep, I raiſe my voice to you.
Where are your ſtores, ye powerful beings! ſay,
Where your aerial magazines reſerv'd,
To ſwell the brooding terrors of the ſtorm? 115

In what far diſtant region of the ſky,
Huſh'd in deep ſilence, ſleep ye when 'tis calm?

When from the pallid ſky the ſun deſcends,
With many a ſpot, that o'er his glaring orb
Uncertain wanders, ſtain'd; red fiery ſtreaks 120
Begin to fluſh around. The reeling clouds
Stagger with dizzy poiſe, as doubting yet
Which maſter to obey: while riſing ſlow,
Blank, in the leaden-colour'd eaſt, the moon
Wears a wan circle round her blunted horns. 125
Seen thro' the turbid fluctuating air,
The ſtars obtuſe, emit a ſhivered ray;
Or frequent ſeem to ſhoot athwart the gloom,
And long behind them trail the whitening blaze.
Snatch'd in ſhort eddies, plays the wither'd leaf; 130
And on the flood the dancing feather floats.
With broaden'd noſtrils to the ſky up-turn'd,
The conſcious heifer ſnuffs the ſtormy gale.
Even as the matron, at her nightly taſk,
With penſive labour draws the flaxen thread, 135
The waſted taper and the crackling flame
Foretel the blaſt. But chief the plumy race,
The tenants of the ſky, its changes ſpeak.
Retiring from the downs, where all day long
They pick'd their ſcanty fare, a blackening train 140
Of clamorous rooks thick-urge their weary flight,
And ſeek the cloſing ſhelter of the grove;

Aſſiduous, in his bower, the wailing owl
Plies his ſad ſong. The cormorant on high
Wheels from the deep, and ſcreams along the land. 145
Loud ſhrieks the ſoaring heron; and with wild wing,
The circling ſea-fowl cleave the flaky clouds.
Ocean, unequal preſs'd, with broken tide
And blind commotion heaves; while from the ſhore,
Eat into caverns by the reſtleſs wave, 150
And foreſt-ruſtling mountains, comes a voice,
That ſolemn ſounding bids the world prepare.
Then iſſues forth the ſtorm with ſudden burſt,
And hurls the whole precipitated air,
Down, in a torrent. On the paſſive main 155
Deſcends th' ethereal force, and with ſtrong guſt
Turns from its bottom the diſcolour'd deep.
Thro' the black night that ſits immenſe around,
Laſh'd into foam, the fierce conflicting brine
Seems o'er a thouſand raging waves to burn: 160
Meantime the mountain-billows, to the clouds
In dreadful tumult ſwell'd, ſurge above ſurge,
Burſt into chaos with tremendous roar,
And anchor'd Navies from their ſtations drive,
Wild as the winds acroſs the howling waſte 165
Of mighty waters: now th' inflated wave
Straining they ſcale, and now impetuous ſhoot
Into the ſecret chambers of the deep,
The wint'ry Baltic thundering o'er their head.
Emerging thence again, before the breath 170

Of full-exerted heaven they wing their courſe,
And dart on diſtant coaſts; if ſome ſharp rock,
Or ſhoal inſidious break not their career,
And in looſe fragments fling them floating round.

Nor leſs at land the looſen'd tempeſt reigns. 175
The mountain thunders; and its ſturdy ſons
Stoop to the bottom of the rocks they ſhade.
Lone on the midnight ſteep, and all aghaſt,
The dark way-fairing ſtranger breathleſs toils,
And, often falling, climbs againſt the blaſt. 180
Low waves the rooted foreſt, vex'd, and ſheds
What of its tarniſh'd honours yet remain;
Daſh'd down, and ſcatter'd, by the tearing wind's
Aſſiduous fury, its gigantic limbs.
Thus ſtruggling thro' the diſſipated grove, 185
The whirling tempeſt raves along the plain;
And on the cottage thatch'd, or lordly roof,
Keen-faſtening, ſhakes them to the ſolid baſe.
Sleep frighted flies; and round the rocking dome,
For entrance eager, howls the ſavage blaſt. 190
Then too, they ſay, thro' all the burden'd air,
Long groans are heard, ſhrill ſounds, and diſtant ſighs,
That, utter'd by the demon of the night,
Warn the devoted wretch of woe and death.

Huge uproar lords it wide. The clouds commix'd
With ſtars ſwift gliding ſweep along the ſky. 196

All Nature reels. Till Nature's KING, who oft
Amidſt tempeſtuous darkneſs dwells alone,
And on the wings of the careering wind
Walks dreadfully ſerene, commands a calm; 200
Then ſtraight air, ſea and earth, are huſh'd at once.

As yet 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
Slow-meeting, mingle into ſolid gloom.
Now, while the drowſy world lies loſt in ſleep,
Let me aſſociate with the ſerious Night, 205
And Contemplation her ſedate compeer;
Let me ſhake off th' intruſive cares of day,
And lay the meddling ſenſes all aſide.

WHERE now, ye lying vanities of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train! 210
Where are you now? and what is your amount?
Vexation, diſappointment, and remorſe.
Sad, ſickening thought! and yet deluded Man,
A ſcene of crude disjointed viſions paſt,
And broken ſlumbers, riſes ſtill reſolv'd, 215
With new-fluſh'd hopes, to run the giddy round.

FATHER of light and life, thou GOOD SUPREME!
O teach me what is good! teach me THYSELF!
Save me from folly, vanity, and vice,
From every low purſuit! and feed my ſoul 220

In joyleſs fields and thorny thickets, leaves
His ſhivering mates, and pays to truſted Man
His annual viſit. Half-afraid, he firſt 250
Againſt the window beats; then, briſk, alights
On the warm hearth; then, hopping o'er the floor,
Eyes all the ſmiling family aſkance,
And pecks, and ſtarts, and wonders where he is:
'Till more familiar grown, the table-crumbs 255
Attract his ſlender feet. The foodleſs wilds
Pour forth their brown inhabitants. The hare,
Tho' timorous of heart, and hard beſet
By death in various forms, dark ſnares, and dogs,
And more unpitying Men, the garden ſeeks, 260
Urg'd on by fearleſs want. The bleating kind
Eye the bleak heaven, and next the gliſt'ning earth,
With looks of dumb deſpair; then, ſad-diſpers'd,
Dig for the wither'd herb thro' heaps of ſnow.
Now, ſhepherds, to your helpleſs charge be kind, 265
Baffle the raging year, and fill their pens
With food at will; lodge them below the ſtorm,
And watch them ſtrict: for from the bellowing Eaſt,
In this dire ſeaſon, oft the whirlwind's wing
Sweeps up the burden of whole wint'ry plains 270
At one wide waft, and o'er the hapleſs flocks,
Hid in the hollow of two neighbouring hills,
The billowy tempeſt whelms; till, upward urg'd,
The valley to a ſhining mountain ſwells,
Tipt with a wreath high-curling in the ſky. 275

With knowledge, conſcious peace, and virtue pure;
Sacred, ſubſtantial, never-fading bliſs!

THE keener tempeſts riſe: and fuming dun
From all the livid eaſt, or piercing north,
Thick clouds aſcend; in whoſe capacious womb 225
A vapoury deluge lies, to ſnow congeal'd.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along;
And the ſky ſaddens with the gather'd ſtorm.
Thro' the huſh'd air the whitening ſhower deſcends,
At firſt thin wav'ring; till at laſt the flakes 230
Fall broad, and wide, and faſt, dimming the day,
With a continual flow. The cheriſh'd fields
Put on their winter-robe of pureſt white.
'Tis brightneſs all; ſave where the new ſnow melts
Along the mazy current. Low, the woods 235
Bow their hoar head; and, ere the languid ſun
Faint from the weſt emits his evening ray,
Earth's univerſal face, deep hid, and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waſte, that buries wide
The works of Man. Drooping, the labourer-ox 240
Stands cover'd o'er with ſnow, and then demands
The fruit of all his toil. The fowls of heaven,
Tam'd by the cruel ſeaſon, crowd around
The winnowing ſtore, and claim the little boon
Which PROVIDENCE aſſigns them. One alone, 245
The red-breaſt, ſacred to the houſhold gods,
Wiſely regardful of th' embroiling ſky,

As thus the ſnows ariſe; and foul, and fierce,
All Winter drives along the darken'd air;
In his own looſe-revolving fields, the ſwain
Diſaſter'd ſtands: ſees other hills aſcend,
Of unknown joyleſs brow; and other ſcenes, 280
Of horrid proſpect, ſhag the tractleſs plain:
Nor finds the river, nor the foreſt, hid
Beneath the formleſs wild; but wanders on
From hill to dale, ſtill more and more aſtray;
Impatient flouncing thro' the drifted heaps, 285
Stung with the thoughts of home; the thoughts of home
Ruſh on his nerves, and call their vigour forth
In many a vain attempt. How ſinks his ſoul!
What black deſpair, what horror fills his heart!
When for the duſky ſpot, which fancy feign'd 290
His tufted cottage riſing thro' the ſnow,
He meets the roughneſs of the middle waſte,
Far from the track, and bleſt abode of Man;
While round him night reſiſtleſs cloſes faſt,
And every tempeſt, howling o'er his head, 295
Renders the ſavage wilderneſs more wild.
Then throng the buſy ſhapes into his mind,
Of cover'd pits, unfathomably deep,
A dire deſcent! beyond the power of froſt,
Of faithleſs bogs; of precipices huge, 300
Smooth'd up with ſnow: and, what is land, unknown,
What water, of the ſtill unfrozen ſpring,
In the looſe marſh, or ſolitary lake,

Where the freſh fountain from the bottom boils.
Theſe check his fearful ſteps; and down he ſinks 305
Beneath the ſhelter of the ſhapeleſs drift,
Thinking o'er all the bitterneſs of death,
Mix'd with the tender anguiſh Nature ſhoots
Thro' the wrung boſom of the dying man,
His wife, his children, and his friends unſeen. 310
In vain for him th' officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the veſtment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling ſtorm, demand their fire,
With tears of artleſs innocence. Alas! 315
Nor wife, nor children, more ſhall he behold,
Nor friends, nor ſacred home. On every nerve
The deadly winter ſeizes; ſhuts up ſenſe;
And, o'er his inmoſt vitals creeping cold;
Lays him along the ſnows, a ſtiffened corſe, 320
Stretch'd out, and bleaching in the northern blaſt.

Ah little think the gay licentious proud,
Whom pleaſure, power, and affluence ſurround;
They, who their thoughtleſs hours in giddy mirth,
And wanton, often cruel, riot waſte; 325
Ah little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death
And all the ſad variety of pain.
How many ſink in the devouring flood,
Or more devouring flame. How many bleed, 330

By ſhameful variance betwixt Man and Man.
How many pine in want, and dungeon glooms;
Shut from the common air, and common uſe
Of their own limbs. How many drink the cup
Of baleful grief, or eat the bitter bread 335
Of miſery. Sore pierc'd by wint'ry winds,
How many ſhrink into the ſordid hut
Of chearleſs poverty. How many ſhake
With all the fiercer tortures of the mind,
Unbounded paſſion, madneſs, guilt, remorſe; 340
Whence tumbled headlong from the height of life,
They furniſh matter for the tragic Muſe.
Even in the vale, where wiſdom loves to dwell,
With friendſhip, peace, and contemplation join'd
How many, rack'd with honeſt paſſions, droop 345
In deep retir'd diſtreſs. How many ſtand
Around the death-bed of their deareſt friends,
And point the parting anguiſh. Thought fond Man
Of theſe, and all the thouſand nameleſs ills,
That one inceſſant ſtruggle render life, 350
One ſcene of toil, of ſuffering, and of fate,
Vice in his high career would ſtand appall'd,
And heedleſs rambling Impulſe learn to think;
The conſcious heart of Charity would warm,
And her wide wiſh Benevolence dilate; 355
The ſocial tear would riſe, the ſocial ſigh;
And into clear perfection, gradual bliſs,
Refining ſtill, the ſocial paſſions work.

And here can I forget the generous band [a]
Who touch'd with human woe, redreſſive ſearch'd
Into the horrors of the gloomy jail? 361
Unpitied and unheard, where miſery moans;
Where ſickneſs pines; where thirſt and hunger burn,
And poor misfortune feels the laſh of vice.
While in the land of liberty, the land 365
Whoſe every ſtreet and public meeting glow
With open freedom, little tyrants rag'd;
Snatch'd the lean morſel from the ſtarving mouth;
Tore from cold wint'ry limbs the tatter'd weed;
Even robb'd them of the laſt of comforts, ſleep; 370
The free-born Briton to the dungeon chain'd,
Or, as the luſt of cruelty prevail'd
At pleaſure mark'd him with inglorious ſtripes;
And cruſh'd out lives, by ſecret barbarous ways,
That for their country would have toil'd, or bled. 375
O great deſign! if executed well,
With patient care, and wiſdom-temper'd zeal.
Ye ſons of mercy! yet reſume the ſearch;
Drag forth the legal monſters into light,
Wrench from their hands oppreſſion's iron rod, 380
And bid the cruel feel the pains they gave.
Much ſtill untouch'd remains; in this rank age,
Much is the patriot's weeding hand requir'd.
The toils of law, (what dark infidious Men
Have cumbrous added to perplex the truth, 385
And lengthen ſimple juſtice into trade)

How glorious were the day! that ſaw theſe broke,
And every Man within the reach of right.

By wint'ry famine rous'd, from all the tract
Of horrid mountains which the ſhining Alps, 390
And wavy Apennine, and Pyrenees,
Branch out ſtupendous into diſtant lands;
Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave!
Burning for blood! bony, and gaunt, and grim!
Aſſembling wolves in raging troops deſcend; 395
And, pouring o'er the country, bear along,
Keen as the north-wind ſweeps the gloſſy ſnow.
All is their prize. They faſten on the ſteed,
Preſs him to earth, and pierce his mighty heart.
Nor can the bull his awful front defend, 400
Or ſhake the murdering ſavages away.
Rapacious, at the mother's throat they fly,
And tear the ſcreaming infant from her breaſt.
The godlike face of Man avails him nought.
Even beauty, force divine! at whoſe bright glance
The generous lion ſtands in ſoftened gaze, 406
Here bleeds, a haplefs undiſtinguiſh'd prey.
But if, appriz'd of the ſevere attack,
The country be ſhut up, lur'd by the ſcent,
On church yards drear (inhuman to relate!) 410
The diſappointed prowlers fall, and dig
The ſhrouded body from the grave; o'er which,
Mix'd with foul ſhades, and frighted ghoſts, they howl.

AMONG thoſe hilly regions, where embrac'd
In peaceful vales the happy Griſons dwell; 415
Oft, ruſhing ſudden from the loaded cliffs,
Mountains of ſnow their gathering terrors roll.
From ſteep to ſteep, loud-thundering down they come,
A wint'ry waſte in dire commotion all;
And herds, and flocks, and travellers, and ſwains, 420
And ſometimes whole brigades of marching troops,
Or hamlets ſleeping in the dead of night,
Are deep beneath the ſmothering ruin whelm'd.

Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of Winter, while without 425
The ceaſeleſs winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning foreſt and the ſhore
Beat by the boundleſs multitude of waves,
A rural, ſhelter'd, ſolitary ſcene;
Where ruddy fire and beaming tapers join, 430
To cheer the gloom. There ſtudious let me ſit,
And hold high converſe with the MIGHTY DEAD;
Sages of ancient time, as gods rever'd,
As gods beneficent, who bleſt mankind
With arts, with arms, and humaniz'd a world. 435
Rous'd at th' inſpiring thought, I throw aſide
The long-liv'd volume; and, deep-muſing, hail
The ſacred ſhades, that ſlowly-riſing paſs
Before my wondering eyes. Firſt SOCRATES,
Who, firmly good in a corrupted ſtate, 440

Against the rage of tyrants single stood,
Invincible! calm reason's holy law,
That voice of GOD within th' attentive mind,
Obeying, fearless, or in life, or death:
Great moral teacher; Wisest of Mankind! 445
SOLON the next, who built his common-weal
On Equity's wide base; by tender laws
A lively people curbing, yet undamp'd,
Preserving still that quick peculiar fire,
Whence in the laurel'd field of finer arts, 450
And of bold freedom, they unequal'd shone,
The pride of smiling GREECE, and human-kind.
LYCURGUS then, who bow'd beneath the force
Of strictest discipline, severely wise,
All human passions. Following him, I see, 455
As at Thermopylæ he glorious fell,
The firm DEVOTED CHIEF [b], who prov'd by deeds
The hardest lesson which the other taught.
Then ARISTIDES lifts his honest front;
Spotless of heart, to whom th' unflattering voice 460
Of freedom gave the noblest name of Just;
In pure majestic poverty rever'd;
Who, even his glory to his country's weal
Submitting, swell'd a haughty Rival's [c] fame.
Rear'd by his care, of softer ray appears 465
CIMON, sweet-soul'd; whose genius, rising strong,
Shook off the load of young debauch; abroad
The scourge of Persian pride, at home the friend

Of every worth and every ſplendid art;
Modeſt, and ſimple, in the pomp of wealth. 470
Then the laſt worthies of declining GREECE,
Late call'd to Glory, in unequal times,
Penſive, appear. The fair Corinthian boaſt,
TIMOLEON, happy temper! mild, and firm,
Who wept the Brother, while the Tyrant bled, 475
And, equal to the beſt, the THEBAN PAIR d,
Whoſe virtues, in heroic Concord join'd,
Their country rais'd to freedom, empire, fame.
He too, with whom Athenian honour ſunk,
And left a maſs of ſordid lees behind, 480
PHOCION the Good; in public life ſevere,
To virtue ſtill inexorably firm;
But when, beneath his low illuſtrious roof,
Sweet peace and happy wiſdom ſmooth'd his brow,
Not friendſhip ſofter was, nor love more kind. 485
And he, the laſt of old LYCURGUS' ſons,
The generous victim to that vain attempt,
To ſave a rotten ſtate, AGIS, who ſaw
Even SPARTA's ſelf to ſervile avarice ſunk:
The two Achaian heroes cloſe the train. 490
ARATUS, who a while relum'd the ſoul
Of fondly lingering liberty in GREECE:
And he her darling as her lateſt hope,
The gallant PHILOPOEMEN; who to arms
Turn'd the luxurious pomp he could not cure; 495

Or toiling in his farm, a ſimple ſwain;
Or, bold and ſkilful, thundering in the field.

Of rougher front, a mighty people come!
A race of heroes! in thoſe virtuous times
Which knew no ſtain, ſave that with partial flame 500
Their deareſt country they too fondly lov'd:
Her better Founder firſt, the light of Rome,
Numa, who ſoften'd her rapacious ſons:
Servius the King, who laid the ſolid baſe
On which o'er earth the vaſt republic ſpread. 505
Then the great conſuls venerable riſe.
The [e] Public Father who the Private quell'd,
And on the dread tribunal ſternly ſad.
He, whom his thankleſs country could not loſe,
Camillus, only vengeful to her foes. 510
Fabricius, ſcorner of all-conquering gold;
And Cincinnatus, awful from the plough.
Thy [f] willing Victim, Carthage, burſting looſe
From all that pleading Nature could oppoſe,
From a whole city's tears, by rigid faith 515
Imperious call'd and honour's dire command.
Scipio, the gentle chief, humanely brave,
Who ſoon the race of ſpotleſs glory ran,
And, warm, in youth, to the Poetic ſhade
With Friendſhip and Philoſophy retir'd. 520
Tully, whoſe powerful eloquence a while
Reſtrain'd the rapid fate of ruſhing Rome.

Unconquer'd CATO, virtuous in extreme.
And thou, unhappy BRUTUS, kind of heart,
Whose steady arm, by awful virtue urg'd, 525
Lifted the Roman steel against thy Friend.
Thousands besides the tribute of a verse
Demand; but who can count the stars of heaven;
Who sing their influence on this lower world?

BEHOLD, who yonder comes! in sober state, 530
Fair, mild, and strong, as is a vernal sun:
'Tis Phœbus' self, or else the Mantuan Swain!
Great HOMER too appears, of daring wing,
Parent of song! and equal by his side,
The BRITISH MUSE; join'd hand in hand they walk,
Darkling, full up the middle steep to fame. 536
Nor absent are those shades, whose skilful touch
Pathetic drew th' impassion'd heart, and charm'd
Transported Athens with the MORAL SCENE: 539
Nor those who, tuneful, wak'd th' enchanting LYRE.

FIRST of your kind! society divine!
Still visit thus my nights, for you reserv'd,
And mount my soaring soul to thoughts like yours.
Silence, thou lonely power! the door be thine;
See on the hallow'd hour that none intrude, 545
Save a few chosen friends, who sometimes deign
To bless my humble roof, with sense refin'd,
Learning digested well, exalted faith,

Unſtudy'd wit, and humour ever gay.
Or from the Muſes' hill will POPE deſcend, 550
To raiſe the ſacred hour, to bid it ſmile,
And with the ſocial ſpirit warm the heart:
For tho' not ſweeter his own HOMER ſings,
Yet is his life the more endearing ſong.

WHERE art thou, HAMMOND? thou the darling pride,
The friend and lover of the tuneful throng! 556
Ah why, dear youth, in all the blooming prime
Of vernal genius, where diſcloſing faſt
Each active worth, each manly virtue lay,
Why wert thou raviſh'd from our hope ſo ſoon? 560
What now avails that noble thirſt of fame,
Which ſtung thy fervent breaſt? that treaſur'd ſtore
Of knowledge, early gain'd? that eager zeal
To ſerve thy country, glowing in the band
Of YOUTHFUL PATRIOTS, who ſuſtain her name? 565
What now, alas! that life-diffuſing charm
Of ſprightly wit? that rapture for the Muſe,
That heart of friendſhip, and that ſoul of joy,
Which bade with ſofteſt light thy virtues ſmile?
Ah! only ſhew'd, to check our fond purſuits, 570
And teach our humbled hopes that life is vain!

THUS in ſome deep retirement would I paſs
The winter-glooms, with friends of pliant ſoul,
Or blithe, or ſolemn, as the theme inſpir'd:

With them would ſearch, if Nature's boundleſs frame
Was call'd, late-riſing from the void of night, 575
Or ſprung eternal from th' ETERNAL MIND;
Its life, its laws, its progreſs, and its end.
Hence larger proſpects, of the beauteous whole,
Would, gradual, open on our opening minds; 580
And each diffuſive harmony unite,
In full perfection to th' aſtoniſh'd eye.
Then would we try to ſcan the moral world,
Which, tho' to us it ſeems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd, 585
By WISDOM's fineſt hand, and iſſuing all
In general Good. The ſage hiſtoric Muſe
Should next conduct us thro' the depth of time:
Shew us how empire grew, declin'd, and fell,
In ſcatter'd ſtates; what makes the nations ſmile, 590
Improves their ſoil, and gives them double ſuns;
And why they pine beneath the brighteſt ſkies,
In Nature's richeſt lap. As thus we talk'd,
Our hearts would burn within us, would inhale
That portion of divinity, that ray 595
Of pureſt heav'n, which lights the public ſoul
Of patriots, and of heroes. But if doom'd,
In powerleſs humble fortune, to repreſs
Theſe ardent riſings of the kindling ſoul;
Then, even ſuperior to ambition, we 600
Would learn the private virtues; how to glide
Thro' ſhades and plains, along the ſmootheſt ſtream

Of rural life: or ſnatch'd away by hope,
Thro' the dim ſpaces of futurity,
With earneſt eye anticipate thoſe ſcenes 605
Of happineſs, and wonder; where the mind,
In endleſs growth and infinite aſcent,
Riſes from ſtate to ſtate, and world to world.
But when with theſe the ſerious thought is foil'd,
We, ſhifting for relief, would play the ſhapes 610
Of frolic fancy; and inceſſant form
Thoſe rapid pictures, that aſſembled train
Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
Whence lively Wit excites to gay ſurpriſe;
Or folly-painting Humour, grave himſelf, 615
Calls Laughter forth, deep-ſhaking every nerve.

MEANTIME the village rouſes up the fire;
While well atteſted, and as well believ'd,
Heard ſolemn, goes the goblin-ſtory round;
Till ſuperſtitious horror creeps o'er all. 620
Or, frequent in the ſounding hall, they wake
The rural gambol. Ruſtic mirth goes round;
The ſimple joke that takes the ſhepherd's heart,
Eaſily pleas'd; the long loud laugh, ſincere;
The kiſs, ſnatch'd haſty from the ſide-long maid, 625
On purpoſe guardleſs, or pretending ſleep:
The leap, the ſlap, the haul; and, ſhook to notes
Of native muſic, the reſpondent dance.
Thus jocund fleets with them the winter-night.

THE city ſwarms intenſe. The public haunt, 630
Full of each theme, and warm with mix'd diſcourſe,
Hums indiſtinct. The ſons of riot flow
Down the looſe ſtream of falſe inchanted joy,
To ſwift deſtruction. On the rankled ſoul
The gaming fury falls; and in one gulph 635
Of total ruin, honour, virtue, peace,
Friends, families, and fortune, headlong ſink.
Up-ſprings the dance along the lighted dome,
Mix'd, and evolv'd, a thouſand ſprightly ways.
The glitt'ring court effuſes every pomp; 640
The circle deepens; beam'd from gaudy robes,
Tapers, and ſparkling gems, and radiant eyes,
A ſoft effulgence o'er the palace waves:
While, a gay inſect in his ſummer-ſhine,
The fop, light-fluttering, ſpreads his mealy wings. 645

DREAD o'er the ſcene, the ghoſt of HAMLET ſtalks;
OTHELLO rages; poor MONIMIA mourns;
And BELVIDERA pours her ſoul in love.
Terror alarms the breaſt; the comely tear
Steals o'er the cheek: or elſe the COMIC MUSE 650
Holds to the world a picture of itſelf,
And raiſes ſly the fair impartial laugh.
Sometimes ſhe lifts her ſtrain, and paints the ſcenes
Of beauteous life; whate'er can deck mankind,
Or charm the heart, in generous [g] BEVIL ſhew'd. 655

O THOU, whoſe wiſdom, ſolid yet refin'd,
Whoſe patriot virtues, and conſummate ſkill
To touch the finer ſprings that move the world,
Join'd to whate'er the Graces can beſtow,
And all Apollo's animating fire, 660
Give thee, with pleaſing dignity, to ſhine
At once the guardian, ornament, and joy,
Of poliſh'd life; permit the Rural Muſe,
O CHESTERFIELD, to grace with thee her ſong!
Ere to the ſhades again ſhe humbly flies, 665
Indulge her fond ambition, in thy train,
(For every Muſe has in thy train a place)
To mark thy various full-accompliſh'd mind:
To mark that ſpirit, which, with Britiſh ſcorn,
Rejects th' allurements of corrupted power; 670
That elegant politeneſs, which excels,
Even in the judgment of preſumptuous France,
The boaſted manners of her ſhining court;
That wit, the vivid energy of ſenſe,
The truth of Nature, which, with Attic point, 675
And kind well-temper'd ſatire, ſmoothly keen,
Steals thro' the ſoul, and without pain corrects.
Or, riſing thence with yet a brighter flame,
O let me hail thee on ſome glorious day,
When to the liſtening Senate, ardent, crowd 680
BRITANNIA's ſons to hear her pleaded cauſe.
Then dreſt by thee, more amiably fair,
Truth the ſoft robe of mild perſuaſion wears;

Thou to aſſenting reaſon giv'ſt again
Her own enlighten'd thoughts; call'd from the heart,
Th' obedient paſſions on thy voice attend; 686
And even reluctant party feels a while
660 Thy gracious power: as thro' the varied maze
Of eloquence, now ſmooth, now quick, now ſtrong,
Profound and clear, you roll the copious flood. 690

To thy lov'd haunt return, my happy Muſe:
665 For now, behold, the joyous Winter-days,
Froſty, ſucceed; and thro' the blue ſerene,
For ſight too fine, th' ethereal nitre flies;
Killing infectious damps, and the ſpent air 695
Storing afreſh with elemental life.
670 Cloſe crowds the ſhining atmoſphere; and binds
Our ſtrengthen'd bodies in its cold embrace,
Conſtringent; feeds, and animates our blood;
Refines our ſpirits, through the new-ſtrung nerves, 700
In ſwifter ſallies darting to the brain;
675 Where ſits the ſoul, intenſe, collected, cool,
Bright as the ſkies, and as the ſeaſon keen.
All Nature feels the renovating force
Of Winter, only to the thoughtleſs eye 705
In ruin ſeen. The froſt-concocted glebe
680 Draws in abundant vegetable ſoul,
And gathers vigour for the coming year.
A ſtronger glow ſits on the lively cheek
Of ruddy fire; and luculent along 710

The purer rivers flow; their sullen deeps,
Transparent, open to the shepherd's gaze,
And murmur hoarser at the fixing frost.

WHAT art thou, frost? and whence are thy keen stores
Deriv'd, thou secret all-invading power, 715
Whom even th' illusive fluid cannot fly?
Is not thy potent energy, unseen,
Myriads of little salts, or hook'd, or shap'd
Like double wedges, and diffus'd immense
Thro' water, earth, and ether? Hence at eve, 720
Steam'd eager from the red horizon round,
With the fierce rage of Winter deep suffus'd,
An icy gale, oft shifting, o'er the pool
Breathes a blue film, and in its mid career
Arrests the bickering stream. The loosen'd ice, 725
Let down the flood, and half-dissolv'd by day,
Rustles no more; but to the sedgy bank
Fast grows, or gathers round the pointed stone,
A crystal pavement, by the breath of heaven
Cemented firm; till, seiz'd from shore to shore, 730
The whole imprison'd river growls below.
Loud rings the frozen earth, and hard reflects
A double noise; while at his evening watch,
The village dog deters the nightly thief;
The heifer lows; the distant water-fall 735
Swells in the breeze; and, with the hasty tread
Of traveller, the hollow-sounding plain

Shakes from afar. The full ethereal round,
Infinite worlds diſcloſing to the view,
Shines out intenſely keen; and all, one cope 740
Of ſtarry glitter, glows from pole to pole.
From pole to pole the rigid influence falls,
Thro' the ſtill night, inceſſant, heavy, ſtrong,
And ſeizes Nature faſt. It freezes on;
Till morn, late riſing o'er the drooping world, 745
Lifts her pale eye unjoyous. Then appears
The various labour of the ſilent night:
Prone from the dripping cave, and dumb caſcade,
Whoſe idle torrents only ſeem to roar,
The pendant icicle; the froſt-work fair, 750
Where tranſient hues, and fancy'd figures riſe;
Wide ſpouted o'er the hill, the frozen brook,
A livid tract, cold-gleaming on the morn;
The foreſt bent beneath the plumy wave;
And by the froſt refin'd the whiter ſnow, 755
Incruſted hard, and ſounding to the tread
Of early ſhepherd, as he penſive ſeeks
His pining flock, or from the mountain top,
Pleas'd with the ſlippery ſurface, ſwift deſcends.

On blithſome frolics bent, the youthful ſwains, 760
While every work of Man is laid at reſt,
Fond o'er the river crowd, in various ſport
And revelry diſſolv'd; where mixing glad,
Happieſt of all the train! the raptur'd boy

Lashes the whirling top. Or, where the Rhine 765
Branch'd out in many a long canal extends,
From every province swarming, void of care,
Batavia rushes forth; and as they sweep,
On sounding skates, a thousand different ways,
In circling poise, swift as the winds along, 770
The then gay land is maddened all to joy.
Nor less the northern courts, wide o'er the snow,
Pour a new pomp. Eager, on rapid sleds,
Their vigorous youth in bold contention wheel
The long-resounding course. Meantime, to raise 775
The manly strife, with highly blooming charms,
Flush'd by the season, Scandinavia's dames,
Or Russia's buxom daughters glow around.

PURE, quick, and sportful, is the wholesome day;
But soon elaps'd. The horizontal sun, 780
Broad o'er the south, hangs at his utmost noon:
And, ineffectual, strikes the gelid cliff:
His azure gloss the mountain still maintains,
Nor feels the feeble touch. Perhaps the vale
Relents a while to the reflected ray; 785
Or from the forest falls the cluster'd snow,
Myriads of gems, that in the waving gleam
Gay-twinkle as they scatter. Thick around
Thunders the sport of those, who with the gun,
And dog impatient bounding at the shot, 790
Worse than the season, desolate the fields;

And, adding to the ruins of the year,
Diſtreſs the footed or the feathered game.

But what is this? Our infant Winter ſinks,
Diveſted of his grandeur, ſhould our eye 795
Aſtoniſh'd ſhoot into the Frigid Zone;
Where, for relentleſs months, continual night
Holds o'er the glittering waſte her ſtarry reign.

There, thro' the priſon of unbounded wilds,
Barr'd by the hand of Nature from eſcape, 800
Wide-roams the Ruſſian exile. Nought around
Strikes his ſad eye, but deſarts loſt in ſnow;
And heavy-loaded groves; and ſolid floods,
That ſtretch, athwart the ſolitary vaſt,
Their icy horrors to the frozen main; 805
And cheerleſs towns far-diſtant, never bleſs'd,
Save when its annual courſe the caravan
Bends to the golden-coaſt of rich Cathay,
With news of human-kind. Yet there life glows;
Yet cheriſh'd there, beneath the ſhining waſte, 810
The furry nations harbour: tipt with jet,
Fair Ermines, ſpotleſs as the ſnows they preſs;
Sables, of gloſſy black; and dark embrown'd,
Or beauteous freak'd with many a mingled hue,
Thouſands beſides, the coſtly pride of courts. 815
There, warm together preſs'd, the trooping deer
Sleep on the new-fallen ſnows; and, ſcarce his head

Rais'd o'er the heapy wreath, the branching elk
Lies ſlumbering ſullen in the white abyſs.
The ruthleſs hunter wants nor dogs nor toils, 820
Nor with the dread of ſounding bows he drives
The fearful flying race; with ponderous clubs,
As weak againſt the mountain-heaps they puſh
Their beating breaſt in vain, and piteous bray,
He lays them quivering on th' enſanguin'd ſnows, 825
And with loud ſhouts rejoicing bears them home.
There thro' the piny foreſt half-abſorpt,
Rough tenant of theſe ſhades, the ſhapeleſs bear,
With dangling ice all horrid, ſtalks forlorn;
Slow-pac'd, and ſourer as the ſtorms increaſe, 830
He makes his bed beneath th' inclement drift,
And, with ſtern patience, ſcorning weak complaint,
Hardens his heart againſt aſſailing want.

WIDE o'er the ſpacious regions of the north,
That ſee Bootes urge his tardy wain, 835
A boiſterous race, by froſty [i] Caurus pierc'd,
Who little pleaſure know and fear no pain,
Prolific ſwarm. They once relum'd the flame
Of loſt mankind in poliſh'd ſlavery ſunk,
Drove martial [k] horde on horde, with dreadful ſweep
Reſiſtleſs ruſhing o'er th' enfeebled ſouth, 841
And gave the vanquiſh'd world another form.
Not ſuch the ſons of Lapland: wiſely they
Deſpiſe th' inſenſate barbarous trade war;

They ask no more than simple Nature gives, 845
They love their mountains, and enjoy their storms.
No false desires, no pride-created wants,
Disturb the peaceful current of their time;
And thro' the restless ever-tortur'd maze
Of pleasure, or ambition, bid it rage. 850
Their rein-deer form their riches. These, their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth
Supply, their wholesome fare, and chearful cups.
Obsequious at their call, the docile tribe
Yield to the sled their necks, and whirl them swift 855
O'er hill and dale, heap'd into one expanse
Of marbled snow, as far as eye can sweep
With a blue crust of ice unbounded glaz'd.
By dancing meteors then, that ceaseless shake
A waving blaze refracted o'er the heavens, 860
And vivid moons, and stars that keener play
With doubled lustre from the glossy waste,
Even in the depth of Polar Night, they find
A wondrous day: enough to light the chase,
Or guide their daring steps to Finland-fairs. 865
Wish'd Spring returns; and from the hazy south,
While dim Aurora slowly moves before,
The welcome sun, just verging up at first,
By small degrees extends the swelling curve!
Till seen at last for gay rejoicing months, 870
Still round and round, his spiral course he winds,
And as he nearly dips his flaming orb,

Wheels up again, and reaſcends the ſky.
In that glad ſeaſon, from the lakes and floods,
Where pure [l] Niemi's fairy mountains riſe, 875
And fring'd with roſes [m] Tenglio rolls his ſtream,
They draw the copious fry. With theſe, at eve,
They cheerful-loaded to their tents repair;
Where, all day long in uſeful cares employ'd,
Their kind unblemiſh'd wives the fire prepare. 880
Thrice happy race! by poverty ſecur'd
From legal plunder and rapacious power:
In whom fell intereſt never yet has ſown
The ſeeds of vice: whoſe ſpotleſs ſwains ne'er knew
Injurious deed, nor, blaſted by the breath 885
Of faithleſs love, their blooming daughters woe.

Still preſſing on, beyond Tornea's lake,
And Hecla flaming thro' a waſte of ſnow,
And fartheſt Greenland, to the pole itſelf,
Where, failing gradual, life at length goes out, 890
The Muſe expands her ſolitary flight;
And, hovering o'er the wild ſtupendous ſcene,
Beholds new ſeas beneath [n] another ſky.
Thron'd in his palace of cerulean ice,
Here Winter holds his unrejoicing court; 895
And thro' his airy hall, the loud miſrule
Of driving tempeſt is for ever heard:
Here the grim tyrant meditates his wrath;
Here arms his winds with all-ſubduing froſt;

Moulds his fierce hail, and treasures up his snows, 900
With which he now oppresses half the globe.

THENCE winding eastward to the Tartar's coast,
She sweeps the howling margin of the main;
Where undissolving, from the first of time,
Snows swell on snows amazing to the sky; 905
And icy mountains high on mountains pil'd,
Seem to the shivering sailor from afar,
Shapeless and white, an atmosphere of clouds.
Projected huge, and horrid, o'er the surge,
Alps frown on Alps; or rushing hideous down, 910
As if old Chaos was again return'd
Wide-rend the deep, and shake the solid pole.
Ocean itself no longer can resist
The binding fury; but, in all its rage
Of tempest taken by the boundless frost, 915
Is many a fathom to the bottom chain'd,
And bid to roar no more: a bleak expanse,
Shagg'd o'er with wavy rocks, cheerless, and void
Of every life, that from the dreary months
Flies conscious southward. Miserable they! 920
Who, here entangled in the gathering ice,
Take their last look of the descending sun;
While, full of death, and fierce with tenfold frost,
The long long night, incumbent o'er their heads,
Falls horrible. Such was the [o] BRITON's fate, 925
As with first prow, (what have not BRITONS dar'd!)

He for the paſſage ſought, attempted ſince
So much in vain, and ſeeming to be ſhut
By jealous Nature with eternal bars.
In theſe fell regions, in Arzina caught, 930
And to the ſtony deep his idle ſhip
Immediate ſeal'd, he with his hapleſs crew,
Each full exerted at his ſeveral taſk,
Froze into ſtatues; to the cordage glued
The ſailor, and the pilot to the helm. 935

HARD by theſe ſhores, where ſcarce his freezing ſtream
Rolls the wild Oby, live the laſt of Men;
And half enlivened by the diſtant ſun,
That rears and ripens Man, as well as plants,
Here human Nature wears its rudeſt form. 940
Deep from the piercing ſeaſon ſunk in caves,
Here by dull fires, and with unjoyous cheer,
They waſte the tedious gloom. Immers'd in furs,
Doze the groſs race. Nor ſprightly jeſt, nor ſong,
Nor tenderneſs they know; nor aught of life, 945
Beyond the kindred bears that ſtalk without.
Till morn at length, her roſes drooping all,
Sheds a long twilight brightening o'er their fields,
And calls the quivered ſavage to the chace.

WHAT cannot active government perform, 950
New-moulding Man? Wide-ſtretching from theſe ſhores,
A people ſavage from remoteſt time,

A huge neglected empire, ONE VAST MIND,
By HEAVEN inſpir'd, from Gothic darkneſs call'd.
Immortal PETER! firſt of monarchs! He 955
His ſtubborn country tam'd, her rocks, her fens,
Her floods, her ſeas, her ill-ſubmitting ſons;
And while the fierce barbarian he ſubdu'd,
To more exalted ſoul he rais'd the Man.
Ye ſhades of ancient heroes, ye who toil'd 960
Thro' long ſucceſſive ages to build up
A labouring plan of ſtate, behold at once
The wonder done! behold the matchleſs prince!
Who left his native throne, where reign'd till then
A mighty ſhadow of unreal power; 965
Who greatly ſpurn'd the ſlothful pomp of courts;
And roaming every land, in every port
His ſceptre laid aſide, with glorious hand
Unwearied playing the mechanic tool,
Gather'd the ſeeds of trade! of uſeful arts, 970
Of civil wiſdom, and of martial ſkill.
Charg'd with the ſtores of Europe home he goes!
Then cities riſe amid the illumin'd waſte;
O'er joyleſs deſarts ſmiles the rural reign;
Far-diſtant flood to flood is ſocial join'd; 975
Th' aſtoniſh'd Euxine hears the Baltic roar;
Proud navies ride on ſeas that never foam'd
With daring keel before; and armies ſtretch
Each way their dazzling files, repreſſing here
The frantic Alexander of the north, 980

And awing there ſtern Othman's ſhrinking ſons.
Sloth flies the land, and Ignorance, and Vice,
Of old diſhonour proud; it glows around,
Taught by the ROYAL HAND that rous'd the whole,
One ſcene of arts, of arms, of riſing trade: 985
For what his wiſdom plann'd, and power enforc'd,
More potent ſtill, his great example ſhew'd.

MUTTERING, the winds at eve, with blunted point,
Blow hollow-bluſtering from the ſouth. Subdu'd,
The froſt reſolves into a trickling thaw. 990
Spotted the mountains ſhine; looſe ſleet deſcends,
And floods the country round. The rivers ſwell,
Of bonds impatient. Sudden from the hills,
O'er rocks and woods, in broad brown cataracts,
A thouſand ſnow-fed torrents ſhoot at once; 995
And, where they ruſh, the wide-reſounding plain
Is left one ſlimy waſte. Thoſe ſullen ſeas,
That waſh'd th' ungenial pole, will reſt no more
Beneath the ſhackles of the mighty north;
But, rouſing all their waves, reſiſtleſs heave. 1000
And hark! the lengthening roar continuous runs
Athwart the rifted deep: at once it burſts,
And piles a thouſand mountains to the clouds.
Ill fares the bark with trembling wretches charg'd,
That, toſt amid the floating fragments, moors 1005
Beneath the ſhelter of an icy iſle,
While night o'erwhelms the ſea, and horror looks

More horrible. Can human force endure
Th' aſſembled miſchiefs that beſiege them round?
Heart-gnawing hunger, fainting wearineſs, 1010
The roar of winds and waves, the cruſh of ice,
Now ceaſing, now renew'd with louder rage,
And in dire echoes bellowing round the main.
More to embroil the deep, Leviathan
And his unwieldy train, in dreadful ſport, 1015
Tempeſt the looſened brine, while thro' the gloom,
Far, from the bleak inhoſpitable ſhore,
Loading the winds, is heard the hungry howl
Of famiſh'd monſters, there awaiting wrecks.
Yet PROVIDENCE, that *ever-waking* eye, 1020
Looks down with pity on the feeble toil
Of mortals loſt to hope, and lights them ſafe,
Thro' all this dreary labyrinth of fate.

'TIS done! dread WINTER ſpreads his lateſt glooms,
And reigns tremendous o'er the conquer'd year. 1025
How dead the vegetable kingdom lies!
How dumb the tuneful! Horror wide extends
His deſolate domain. Behold, fond Man!
See here thy pictur'd life; paſs ſome few years,
Thy flowering Spring, thy Summer's ardent ſtrength,
Thy ſober Autumn fading into age, 1031
And pale concluding Winter comes at laſt,
And ſhuts the ſcene. Ah! whither now are fled,
Thoſe dreams of greatneſs? thoſe unſolid hopes

Of happineſs? thoſe longings after fame? 1035
Thoſe reſtleſs cares? thoſe buſy buſtling days?
Thoſe gay-ſpent, feſtive nights? thoſe veering thoughts
Loſt between good and ill, that ſhar'd thy life?
All now are vaniſh'd! VIRTUE ſole-ſurvives,
Immortal, never-failing friend of Man, 1040
His guide to happineſs on high. And ſee!
'Tis come, the glorious morn! the ſecond birth
Of heaven, and earth! awakening Nature hears
The *new creating word*, and ſtarts to life,
In every heightened form, from pain and death 1045
For ever free. *The great eternal ſcheme*,
Involving all, and in a *perfect whole*
Uniting, as the proſpect wider ſpreads,
To reaſon's eye refin'd clears up apace.
Ye vainly wiſe! ye blind preſumptuous! now, 1050
Confounded in the duſt, adore that POWER,
And WISDOM oft arraign'd: ſee now the cauſe,
Why unaſſuming worth in ſecret liv'd,
And died, neglected: why the good Man's ſhare
In life was gall and bitterneſs of ſoul: 1055
Why the lone widow and her orphans pin'd
In ſtarving ſolitude; while luxury,
In palaces, lay ſtraining her low thought,
To form unreal wants: why heaven-born truth,
And moderation fair, wore the red marks 1060
Of ſuperſtition's ſcourge: why licens'd pain,
That cruel ſpoiler, that emboſom'd foe,

Imbitterered all our bliſs. Ye good diſtreſt!
Ye noble few! who here unbending ſtand
Beneath life's preſſure, yet bear up a while, 1065
And what your bounded view, which only ſaw
A little part, deem'd Evil is no more!
The ſtorms of WINTRY TIME will quickly paſs,
And one unbounded SPRING encircle all.

NOTES.

SPRING.

[a] THE fartheſt of the weſtern iſlands of Scotland.

SUMMER.

[a] A young lady, well known to the Author, who died at the age of eighteen, in the year 1738.

[b] Which blows conſtantly between the tropics from the eaſt, or the collateral points, the north-eaſt and ſouth-eaſt; cauſed by the preſſure of the rarified air on that before it, according to the diurnal motion of the ſun from eaſt to weſt.

[c] In all climates between the tropics, the ſun, as he paſſes and repaſſes in his annual motion, is twice a-year vertical, which produces this effect.

[d] The hippopotamus, or river-horſe.

[e] In all the regions of the Torrid zone, the birds, though more beautiful in their plumage, are obſerved to be leſs melodious than ours.

[f] The

f The river that runs through Siam; on whose banks a vast multitude of those insects called *fire-flies*, make a beautiful appearance in the night.

g The river of the Amazons.

h Typhon and Ecnephia, names of particular storms or hurricanes, known only between the tropics.

i Called by sailors the *Ox-eye*, being in appearance, at first, no bigger.

k Vasco de Gama, the first who sailed round Africa, by the Cape of Good Hope, to the East Indies.

l Don Henry, third son to John the First, King of Portugal. His strong genius to the discovery of new countries was the chief source of all the modern improvements in navigation.

m These are the causes supposed to be the first origin of the plague, in Dr Mead's elegant book on that subject.

n The Venus of Medici.

p The old name of Richmond, signifying in Saxon *Shining* or *Splendour*.

q Highgate and Hampstead. r In his last sickness.

s Algernon Sidney.

t Anthony-Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury.

AUTUMN

a The Muscovites call the Riphean mountains *Weliki Camenypoys*, that is, *The great stony girdle*, because they suppose them to encompass the whole earth.

b A range of mountains in Africa, that surround almost all Monomotapa.

c The

[c] The ſeat of the Lord Viſcount Cobham.

[d] The temple of Virtue in Stowe-Gardens

WINTER.

[a] The Jail Committee, in the year 1729.

[b] Leonidas. [c] Themiſtocles.

[d] Pelopidas and Epaminondas.

[e] Marcus Junius Brutus. [f] Regulus.

[g] A Character in the Conſcious Lovers, written by Sir Richard Steele.

[h] The old name for China. The north-weſt wind.

[k] The wandering Scythian clans.

[l] M. de Maupertuis, in his book on the Figure of the Earth, after having deſcribed the beautiful lake and mountain of Niemi in Lapland, ſays,—" From this height we had opportunity ſeveral times to ſee thoſe vapours riſe from the lake which the people of the country call Haltios, and which they deem to be the guardian ſpirits of the mountains. We had been frighted with ſtories of bears that haunted this place, but ſaw none. It ſeemed rather a place of reſort for Fairies and Genii than bears."

[m] The ſame author obſerves,——" I was ſurpriſed to ſee, upon the banks of this river (the Tenglio), roſes of as lively a red as any that are in our gardens."

[n] The other hemiſphere.

[o] Sir Hugh Willoughby, ſent by Queen Elizabeth to diſcover the North-eaſt paſſage.

A

HYMN.

THESE, as they change, ALMIGHTY FATHER, these,
Are but the varied GOD. The rolling year
Is full of thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring
THY beauty walks, THY tenderness and love.
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm; 5
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles;
And every sense, and every heart is joy.
Then comes THY glory in the Summer-months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then THY sun
Shoots full perfection thro' the swelling year: 10
And oft THY voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
And oft at dawn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow-whispering gales.
THY bounty shines in Autumn unconfin'd,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives. 15
In Winter awful THOU! with clouds and storms
Around THEE thrown, tempest o'er tempest roll'd,
Majestic darkness! on the whirlwind's wing,
Riding sublime, THOU bidst the world adore,
And humblest Nature with THY northern blast. 20

MYSTERIOUS round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear! a simple train,

Yet ſo delightful mix'd, with ſuch kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combin'd;
Shade, unperceiv'd, ſo ſoftening into ſhade; 25
And all ſo forming an harmonious whole;
That, as they ſtill ſucceed, they raviſh ſtill.
But wandering oft, with brute unconſcious gaze,
Man marks not THEE, marks not the mighty hand,
That, ever-buſy, wheels the ſilent ſpheres; 30
Works in the ſecret deep; ſhoots, ſteaming, thence
The fair profuſion that o'erſpreads the Spring:
Flings from the ſun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempeſt forth;
And, as on earth this grateful change revolves, 35
With tranſport touches all the ſprings of life.

NATURE, attend! join every living ſoul,
Beneath the ſpacious temple of the ſky,
In adoration join; and, ardent, raiſe
One general ſong! To HIM, ye vocal gales, 40
Breathe ſoft, whoſe SPIRIT in your freſhneſs breathes:
Oh talk of HIM in ſolitary glooms!
Where, o'er the rock, the ſcarcely waving pine
Fills the brown ſhade with a religious awe.
And ye, whoſe bolder note is heard afar, 45
Who ſhake th' aſtoniſh'd world, lift high to heaven
Th' impetuous ſong, and ſay from whom you rage.
HIS praiſe, ye brooks, attune, ye trembling rills;
And let me catch it as I muſe along,

Ye headlong torrents, rapid, and profound; 50
Ye ſofter floods, that lead the humid maze
Along the vale; and thou majeſtic main,
A ſecret world of wonders in thyſelf,
Sound HIS ſtupendous praiſe; whoſe greater voice
Or bids you roar, or bids your roarings fall. 55
Soft-roll your incenſe, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds to HIM; whoſe ſun exalts,
Whoſe breath perfumes you and whoſe pencil paints.
Ye foreſts bend, ye harveſts wave, to HIM;
Breathe your ſtill ſong into the reaper's heart, 60
As home he goes beneath the joyous moon.
Ye that keep watch in heaven, as earth aſleep
Unconſcious lies, effuſe your mildeſt beams,
Ye conſtellations, while your angels ſtrike,
Amid the ſpangled ſky, the ſilver lyre. 65
Great ſource of day! beſt image here below
Of thy Creator, ever pouring wide,
From world to world, the vital ocean round,
On Nature write with every beam HIS praiſe.
The thunder rolls: be huſh'd the proſtrate world; 70
While cloud to cloud returns the ſolemn hymn.
Bleat out afreſh, ye hills: ye moſſy rocks,
Retain the ſound: the broad reſponſive lowe,
Ye vallies, raiſe; for the GREAT SHEPHERD reigns;
And his unſuffering kingdom yet will come. 75
Ye woodlands all, awake: a boundleſs ſong
Burſt from the groves! and when the reſtleſs day,

Expiring, lays the warbling world aſleep,
Sweeteſt of birds! ſweet Philomela, charm
The liſtening ſhades, and teach the night His praiſe.
Ye chief, for whom the whole creation ſmiles, 81
At once the head, the heart, and tongue of all,
Crown the great hymn! in ſwarming cities vaſt,
Aſſembled men, to the deep organ join
The long-reſounding voice, oft breaking clear, 85
At ſolemn pauſes, through the ſwelling baſe;
And, as each mingling flame increaſes each,
In one united ardour riſe to heaven.
Or if you rather chuſe the rural ſhade,
And find a fane in every ſacred grove; 90
There let the ſhepherd's flute, the virgin's lay,
The prompting ſeraph, and the poet's lyre,
Still ſing the God of Seasons, as they roll.
For me, when I forget the darling theme,
Whether the bloſſom blows, the Summer ray 95
Ruſſets the plain, inſpiring Autumn gleams;
Or Winter riſes in the blackening eaſt;
Be my tongue mute, may fancy paint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!

Should fate command me to the fartheſt verge 100
Of the green earth, to diſtant barbarous climes,
Rivers unknown to ſong; where firſt the ſun
Gilds Indian mountains, or his ſetting beam
Flames on th' Atlantic iſles; 'tis nought to me:

Since God is ever present, ever felt, 105
In the void waste as in the city full;
And where He vital breathes there must be joy.
When even at last the solemn hour shall come,
And wing my mystic flight to future worlds,
I cheerful will obey; there, with new powers, 110
Will rising wonders sing: I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbs and all their sons;
From seeming Evil still educing Good,
And Better thence again, and Better still, 115
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in Light ineffable!
Come then, expressive silence, muse His praise.

A

CRITICAL ESSAY

ON THE

SEASONS.

THIS Poem has been often the ſubject of critical examination. Its general deſign, and its particular beauties have been ſkilfully explained by ſeveral able writers. It is almoſt preſumptuous to try the ſame taſk which has already exerciſed the powers of Johnſon, Aikin, and Scott, in the hope of doing more than they have done. Without this hope, it would be impertinent to trouble the Public with a new Eſſay on the Seaſons. The writer of the following piece of Criticiſm, is therefore ſenſible, that after exerting all the care and perſpicacity of which he is capable, in its compoſition, he muſt ſtill throw himſelf upon the candour of his readers.

OF all the Fine Arts, Poetry is the moſt univerſal. In whatever diverſity of circumſtances, as to either improvement or enjoyment, men have ſtill delighted to cultivate this art. The earlieſt compoſitions of every nation are in the figurative ſtyle, if not always

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in the meaſured language, of poetry: and poetry when, at length, ſecluded from the meaner buſineſs of life, has ſtill the nobleſt and moſt extenſive province within the range of human thought, reſerved for her. The ſpeeches of the Indian Chiefs of America are filled with the ardent ſentiments and bold imagery of poeſy: the war-ſongs of the ſavage tribes whom they lead out to the chaſe or the battle, breathe the very ſoul of this divine art. The rude wariours of Scandinavia had their Runic Rhymes in which they celebrated alike their fierce cruelty and their ſullen fortitude. The Laplander, as he wanders through the dreary waſte, invites his rein-deer to liſten to his tender ſtrains of love. The Celtic inhabitants of ancient Caledonia had their manners and ſentiments wonderfully refined above the circumſtances in which they lived, by the influence of that poetry which they fondly cultivated. In the rude, feudal times of modern Europe, the Troubadours and Minſtrels were the delight of every prince's court, and every baron's hall. With the progreſs of knowledge and of manners, Poetry has, in modern, no leſs than in ancient times, aſſumed a more poliſhed air, an aſpect of more chaſtened dignity; and yet accommodating herſelf to the multiplied and more complex modes of life which have ariſen, has, in one form or another, in the Epos, in the Drama, in the Didactic or Deſcriptive Poem, in Elegy, in Ode, or in Sonnet,

ſtill

ſtill maintained and exerciſed her power over the human heart.

YET, have the rules and principles of this Art, intimately connected as it is, in all the nobler and more agreeable concerns of ſocial life, never been reduced, at leaſt in all their extent, to the order and accuracy of ſcience. Even its diſtinctive character has, never yet, been explained with diſcriminating preciſion. It may have been diſtinguiſhed from moſt of the other fine arts which addreſs the eye and the ear: but, the true diſtinction between Poetry and Proſe has not yet been aſcertained by the care of any Critic.* The ſame difficulties, indeed, occur, whenever we attempt to define the exact limits of any of the other more popular arts. The different ſhades ſteal into each other by ſuch an imperceptible gradation, that the line of their meeting mocks the obſervation of the accuteſt eye.

THE diſtinction between Poetry and Proſe, or rather between Poetry and all other compoſitions in language, does not the leſs certainly exiſt, for its being ſo difficult to be diſcerned. Perhaps it is not poetry, but *metre* that is to be diſcriminated from proſe; *metre* being here employed to ſignify all ſorts of rhythmic compoſition in language. The very alliteration in the names of *poetry* and *proſe* ſeems to have miſled various Critics,

* Let me be underſtood to mean here, only that my particular idea of the character of poetry has not been given by any former Critic.

Critics, to aſcribe to them oppoſite characters, which yet, they could not define or explain. *Their* ſucceſsleſs efforts ſuggeſt the propriety of looking out for another opponent than poetry, to proſe. Conſidering *proſe*, therefore, to mean compoſition in language without attention to rhythm; and *metre* to imply, in direct oppoſition to proſe, rhythmic compoſition in language; I ſhall proceed to enquire into the peculiar character of Poetry, as ſomething diſtinct from both.

No induction of particulars can be neceſſary to prove, that the primary object of poetry, is, to affect the *Imagination* and the *Feelings*. This is ſo generally underſtood, that we never have recourſe to poetry for inſtruction, ſo much as for amuſement: and, if inſtruction of any ſort be ever communicated in the form of poetry, it is confeſſedly with a purpoſe to inſinuate the inſtruction inſenſibly into the mind; while the imagination and feelings are intent upon the pleaſure which poetry is calculated to afford. Only through the imagination and the feelings can the mind be affected and entertained. To theſe, therefore, almoſt excluſively, does poetry addreſs herſelf.

Now, the only means by which the feelings of the human heart can be agitated, or the imagination awakened to exerciſe, are, the delineation of *Imagery*, or the expreſſion of *Sentiment*. Shew me ſome particular groupe of the forms of nature, in certain attitudes; or, let me hear thinking, feeling Beings expreſs their joys,

their

their griefs, their desires, and their fears: otherwise, whatever truths you may speak to my understanding, will little affect my heart; unless, perhaps, my imagination shall, in its activity, interfere, to call up those interesting forms, and to speak that language of sentiment, which you have neglected. In explaining general truths to the understanding, it becomes necessary to employ the *fictions* of *abstraction*; to chuse a representative of each class of particular images; to divest even this representative of every quality or circumstance by which it might be particularized; and, adopting a correspondent abbreviation of terms, thus to occupy the imagination so entirely in aiding the discernment of the reasoning faculty, that she is withdrawn from the exercise of her influence on the feelings. Here, therefore, the imagination is wearied, not delighted; and the feelings are nowise agitated. This is, indeed, the most painful exercise to which Imagination can be called. She is compelled to conjure up image after image and to urge on the train, without detaining any one, to gaze fondly on it, as it passes. Hence, the principles of science, unless when accidentally associated with sentiments and imagery which invest them with a captivating particularity, not their own, are never studied solely for the pleasure which the study yields, but in respect to the advantages attached to the knowledge of them.

In poetry, however, general facts are never introduced, unless for the purpose solely of combining and compacting particular sentiments and images. A series of separate images, however sublime or beautiful, or however strikingly pictured, lose their power to impress the feelings, through want of connexion. Sentiments and images are thus necessarily intermingled. And general truths and abstract ideas become requisite, to compose the cement and the moulds by which those primary ingredients of poetry are wrought up together, and maintained in union.—It is thus in the poetry of all nations; nor can the existence of a differently modified, poetical composition be easily conceived. No harmony of numbers, no copiousness, or happy selection of poetical phraseology can render a poem interesting, which is void of sentiment and imagery, or in which the images are faint and awkward, and the sentiments languid or unnatural. Poems have often been found to please, although almost all the rules of the Art were violated in their structure: they pleased, because filled with vivid imagery and glowing sentiment; and even in violation of the rules of the Art, because the primary ingredients can never fail to operate with more or less effect, although there be a deficiency of the secondary materials, or an unskilful use made of them.

Nor is it wonderful that particular images, and particular sentiments should thus be the first elements of

all

all poetry: For, upon enquiring a little more curiouſly, we ſhould find, that thoſe comprehend almoſt all the ſubjects of human thought. There is no ſuch thing as general imagery (ſtrictly ſpeaking) either in nature, or within the power of human conception; and no conception can paſs through the intellect, without, in one way or another, at one time or another, exciting ſome modification of deſire, and aſſuming the character of a ſentiment. In Science, abſtract repreſentations of claſſes of images, and particular ſentiments generalized into maxims, are the principal materials ſought out and employed: particular imagery and particular ſentiments being uſed only for the ſubordinate purpoſe of illuſtration. In poetry, the caſe is reverſed.

As thoſe are the primary ingredients of poetry; ſo, the other materials of which it is compoſed, are more or leſs valuable, and more or leſs eſſentially requiſite, in proportion as they are more nearly or more diſtantly related to thoſe which hold the firſt places. The *Fable*, which is a principal conſtituent, in the higher ſpecies of poetry, may be ſuppoſed to be ſomething different from the Imagery and Sentiments; but, in truth, it is not. What is the fable of any Epic or Dramatic Poem, for inſtance,—but a ſeries of connected events? And, how are events marked to the eye, to the memory, or to the imagination, unleſs by certain combinations of images, and of ſentiments?—All the *Figures* of poetry, or of rhetoric, are nothing elſe

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but imagery and ſentiment variouſly introduced and applied. *Characters* of all kinds are marked in poetry as elſewhere, by perſonal aſpect and carriage, by ſentiments either tranſient or habitual, and by actions in which perſonal aſpect and attitude are varied, and ſentiments are expreſſed. The *Manners* of ſocieties, or of individuals are delineated in a mixture of ſentiments and images. The *Moral Reflexions* in a poem, are ſentiments generalized into maxims. Poetry has no ingredient in its compoſition, that is not a modification of thoſe two great principles. Examine every ſeparate ſpecies of acknowledged, poetical compoſition: Peruſe all the volumes of general or particular criticiſm which modern or ancient literature affords; Still will you find nothing in poetry, and nothing recognized in criticiſm as belonging to it, except one or other of thoſe two great ſubjects of human thought, in ſome of the numberleſs diverſities of form, of which they are ſuſceptible.

We have now, to a certain length, diſcriminated the peculiar character of Poetry. Were it not to be inveſted in the vehicle of Language, we ſhould need to enquire no farther. Its primary object, is, to *affect the internal feelings, and the imagination:* To accompliſh this purpoſe, it, of neceſſity, employs *chiefly particular imagery and particular ſentiments: Its ſecondary and ſubordinate inſtruments are generalized modifications of theſe.*

THIS idea of poetry is, however, ſo general, as to comprehend almoſt all the other Fine Arts. Muſic, indeed, in ſo far as it may be ſuppoſed to act ſimply upon the organ of hearing, falls not under this deſcription. But, Painting, Sculpture, Gardening, Ornamental Architecture, and all the nobler exertions of Muſic agree perfectly, in their interior nature, with Poetry.—It is merely by diverſity of *clothing*, or *vehicle*, that they are diſtinguiſhed from poetry, and from one another. They all addreſs themſelves chiefly to the Imagination, and the Feelings; and ſtrive to affect theſe by the exhibition, or by the ſuggection of particular Images and particular Sentiments; employing *Generalization* (ſtill leſs, indeed, than poetry does, and) only for the ſake of connexion and order.

BUT, ſentiment and imagery, the grand ingredients of poeſy, cannot be communicated from mind to mind, without a vehicle, without intermediate ſigns. Painting has appropriated the magic effects of colours, of the varied diſtribution of lights and ſhades, and partly, of forms. In the full, embodied form are the powers of Sculpture ſeen. Architecture borrows her inſtruments from Sculpture. Forms and colours are the ſigns in Gardening. Sounds are the media of Muſic. Sounds, with arbitrary forms and colours, the ſigns, or exterior inſtruments of the Poet.

USING, equally as the writer in Proſe, the vehicle of language; the poet may, in poetical compoſition, em-

ploy the words, the phrases, the structure of prose, without absolutely destroying, or even violating the peculiar character of the composition which he attempts. Wherever *Abstract Ideas* predominate, the composition is not properly poetry, although in poetic measures and poetic phraseology. Where *sentiment* and *imagery* are the most plentiful ingredients; these constitute the composition Poetry, whatever its style or form. *Telemachus* is a poem, as well as the Iliad. Several of the satires of Churchill are not poetry.

Yet, the use of appropriated words and phrases, is advantageous to Poetry. Its power is shewn in affecting the imagination and the heart. But, the words, the phrases, the divisions of time by sound, which have been debased by familiar use, are unfit instruments for this noble purpose. They have been profaned and prostituted; and it is a sort of sacrilegious audacity to use them in attempting to excite the nobler emotions of the soul. They want that novelty and that dignity which are necessary to promote the impression of poetic sentiment and imagery upon the breast. In the meaner uses which we have been accustomed to make of them, we have learned to attach to them associations of thought, which render them, in many instances, absolutely and strikingly incongruous for the purposes of Poesy. How can that language in which I have just read the newspaper history of the day, with indifference,—convey to my mind any image or sentiment worthy

worthy of poetry, without weakening or abſolutely deſtroying its power?

THE purpoſes of Poetry are therefore moſt ſucceſsfully accompliſhed, when its ſentiments and images are conveyed in appropriated language and meaſures, diſtinct from thoſe of proſe. Poetry, in the moſt enlarged idea that can be conceived of its true character, may therefore be defined; "*An aſſemblage of ſentiments formed to operate directly, and of images operating by the aſſociation of ſentiment, on the imagination and the feelings: Theſe combined, by the aid of Abſtractions, into one ſtructure; and the whole expreſſed in appropriated diction and meaſures.*" Poetry may ſometimes be ſparing of ſentiments and images, as in the Didactic and the Epiſtolary forms; Or may, at times, neglect the uſe of appropriated meaſure and diction: But, in theſe caſes, its energies are only weakened, or its grace impaired; its eſſential characteriſtics not deſtroyed.

THE reſpective ranks of the various ſpecies of poetical compoſition are, then, to be eſtimated by the proportion of ſentiment and imagery which each contains, and by the perfection of appropriated meaſure and diction of which each is ſuſceptible. But, ſince imagery is valuable, only as it is the Repreſentative of ſentiment; ſentiment is therefore the firſt of theſe two eſſential ingredients of poetry; and thoſe poetical compoſitions in which ſentiment predominates, are of a higher character than ſuch as abound more in images.

Upon theſe principles, we muſt readily agree with the Critics, the Poets, and the Readers of poetry in all ages, in aſſigning to Epic Poetry, the firſt rank among all the various ſpecies of poetical compoſition: In the Epic Poem, all that variety of ſentiments which have power to communicate a ſympathetic impulſe to the heart, and all thoſe diverſified images of whoſe impreſſion the imagination is ſuſceptible, are intermingled in almoſt equal profuſion: Nothing can be more admirable than the contrivances by which theſe are here wrought up into one complex, yet uniform and orderly ſtructure: All the riches of poetic diction are required to inveſt ſo noble a frame in ſuitable ſplendour: Variety of meaſure is indeed rejected; and, in Engliſh Epic Poetry, if blank verſe be preferred to rhyme, not the moſt harmonious meaſure employed: But, having thus choſen, for her portion, the nobler ingredients of poetic compoſition, Epic poeſy can ſuffer little by the neglect of its inferior ornaments. Were it not for the brevity and ſimplicity eſſential to the characters of both, I ſhould rank the Lyric and the Paſtoral before the Deſcriptive and the Didactic Poem; nay, but for the ſame reaſon, I ſhould even give to Elegy the precedency before the latter. But, the Deſcriptive ſpecies, which, in the progreſs of poetry, has ariſen, partly out of the paſtoral, partly out of the didactic, and partakes of the characters of both, undeniably excells every other ſpecies of poeſy, except the Epic, in the proportion in

which

which Imagery and Sentiment are eſſentially neceſſary to its ſtructure, in the varied arts by which it prolongs the ſucceſsful operation of theſe upon the heart, and in the ſplendour of diction, if not in the variety of meaſure which it requires. Lyric Poetry neceſſarily ranks, if not before the Deſcriptive, at leaſt immediately after it, and before the Didactic. I am rather inclined to regard the Elegy as a *variety* (to uſe a naturaliſt's term) of the Ode. The Didactic Poem muſt, however, be allowed to come next; and indeed the admirers of Virgil, of De Lille, of Aikenſide, of Armſtrong, of Darwin will hardly be perſuaded to rank it ſo low. I ſhould have reckoned the Drama with, or at leaſt immediately after the Epos. The inferior ſpecies, without being honoured with particular notice, may be allowed to follow after the Didactic, in mobbiſh confuſion.

SUCH at length, appears to be the eſſential character of Poetry; ſuch the juſt order of the different ſpecies of poetical compoſition. This deduction might have been unneceſſary, if Criticiſm had before accurately aſcertained the diſtinctive character of Poetry. But, I have not found this to have been previouſly performed, either by the metaphyſical critics who come, with ſquare and plummet, to take the length, breadth, and thickneſs of thoſe works of taſte, on the merits of which they decide; or by thoſe more refined cenſors who judge, in caſes of this nature, each by the deli-

cacy of his own touch, taſte, and ſmelling.*—It now remains for me to diſcover, what rank the Seaſons of Thomſon deſerve to hold among the works of Deſcriptive Poetry,—by an examination of the Sentiments and Images,—of the Diction,—and of the Verſification of this Poem. With theſe muſt alſo be conſidered the ſtructure, as ſkilful or ill-compacted; and the character of all the materials of the Poem, as original, or borrowed.

THE SEASONS were a happy choice for the ſubject of a Deſcriptive Poem. Each Seaſon preſents, on the face of external nature, in the œconomy of the inferior animal creation, and in the feelings and labours of Man, a ſeries of intereſting imagery peculiar to itſelf. In the progreſs round the year, each ſeaſon ſuperinduces the imagery peculiar to itſelf upon that of the Seaſon which it immediately ſucceeds, with all the ſurpriſing, enchanting effect of a Metamorphoſis. Nature or the modes of human life can hardly preſent any picture to the Fancy, which may not be eaſily enough viewed in connexion with the peculiar appearances of ſome one or other of the Seaſons. Under the impreſſions,

* If this hint be thought ſatirical; Let it be obſerved, that I allude only to thoſe narrow minded Critics, who are the Leaders in the two extremes which I mention. To a *Quintilian* and a *Blair*, I look up with the reverence due to Arbiters of elegance whoſe authority muſt be univerſally acknowledged.

ſions, too, to which their feelings are liable, amidſt their labours and enjoyments, as the Seaſons proceed; Man, and the other thinking, feeling inhabitants of the earth, may be heard to utter all thoſe varied ſentiments of which their hearts are ſuſceptible.

A FIELD thus rich in particular ſentiments, and particular images, cannot be barren of thoſe abſtract ſentiments, and that generalized imagery which are neceſſary to compact the former into one ſtructure,—to give them body and form. Indeed, as the generalization of imagery, and the abſtraction of ſentiments into maxims, are ſolely acts of the mind; it remains with the ſpectator or the deſcriber of thoſe ſhifting ſcenes which the Seaſons exhibit, to uſe more or fewer of the connectives of abſtraction, as he may think proper.—And yet, it muſt be granted, that here is ſuch a countleſs profuſion of particular images, as even the moſt ſkilful poetic Architect may be perplexed to rear into an orderly and graceful fabric. To make the attempt, is, to try to give unity to variety not leſs multiform, than that of Nature, without poſſeſſing Nature's powers of arrangement, or that magic by which ſhe can, at will, make all her works irreſiſtibly charming.

LET us ſee, how Thomſon has improved theſe advantages; and how he has ſurmounted theſe difficulties.

IN SPRING, the face of external nature is more intereſting than in any other ſeaſon of the year. Life ſeems

to ſpring up from the womb of death: vigorous fertility to burſt out amid deſolation: nature, relenting, appears to open her boſom, and to call again to her breaſts, thoſe children from whom ſhe had withdrawn her tenderneſs: the hearts of animals are inſenſibly ſwelled with the ſacred impulſe of love and joy. How ſweet, to catch the firſt genial, weſtern breezes,—to preſs with light ſteps the firſt reviving verdure,—to wander through the woods, when the expanding leaves and burſting buds diffuſe their firſt fragrance,—to pluck the earlieſt daiſy or primroſe, and cry, with rapture; "Mortals, you are not forſaken; nature ſtill vegetates!" How ſweet to hear the firſt, cheary notes of the lark, —to view the lamb newly yeaned, and the ſlender calf, ſporting in the dale,—to gaze on the fairy forms of children, trying their firſt gambols on the green,—to look around from ſome eminence, to ſee on all hands, nothing but life, joy, and glowing animation, and with mingled benevolence and devotion, to raiſe your eyes to heaven, and ſay: "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice!—Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, for his goodneſs to the ſons of men!"—There is a delicate luxury in riſing joy, ſuch as this, while it is yet modeſt, ſoft, and tender, more exquiſite than that of mellowing grief. In the emotions of benevolence, and of conſcious felicity, which opening Spring inſpires, making the heart feel exiſtence as a bleſſing, there is ſomething far more delightful, than in the pleaſing, penſive melancholy

lancholy which the appearances of declining Autumn impreſs upon the ſoul.

In the *Invocation* to Spring, Thomſon, perſonifying the ſeaſon which he is about to celebrate, preſents a lovely, but, I think, rather too faint a picture.

—— *gentle Spring, ethereal mildneſs,* ——

give no image to the imagination, nothing but a perſonification almoſt without attributes. The circumſtances, however, in which the heavenly form is invited to appear, are ſuch as may aid the fancy to diſtinguiſh its features and figure:

—— from the boſom of yon dropping cloud,
While muſic wakes around, veil'd in a ſhower
Of ſhadowing roſes, on our plains deſcend.

The poet ſeems to ſtand in rapt admiration, to gaze eagerly on the *dropping cloud*, to liſten, with fond awe, to the aerial *muſic, waking around;* and, amid theſe emotions, to fancy, that he ſees a Being, auguſt and charming as Venus,—like Flora, inveſted in the faireſt ornaments of vegetation,—but, in timid delicacy, in modeſt dignity, ſurpaſſing both,—deſcend, with majeſtic motion beſide him.

The *howling hill*,—the *ſhatter'd foreſt*,—the *ravag'd vale*, from which Winter calls off his *ruffian blaſts*,—are faint, but happily appropriated images, from which the feelings turn away, with a mixture of horrour and tenderneſs, as imagination preſents them. They are ſo many monuments of the reign of Winter. But, the

——ſofter gales——, at whoſe kind touch,

The mountains lift their green heads to the ſky, ſeem to operate a metamorphoſis with which the mind is ſingularly pleaſed, as it at once ſurpriſes by a ſudden and extraordinary event, produces that event by a benign influence, and preſents a pleaſing proſpect, by its immediate conſequences.

THE poet begins, even in the opening of his poem, to prove how well he was intituled to be the poet of Nature; as having carefully viewed her features, and marked the variations of aſpect to which ſhe is ſubject. For none but a careful obſerver of nature, could have thought of marking the dubious reign of Spring, while winter oft *reſumes the breeze at eve, chills the morn, and bids his ſleets deform the day.* Equally with the ſkill of a naturaliſt, and with the fancy of a poet does he introduce thoſe well-pictured circumſtances of the *bittern, with bill ingulph'd, ſhaking the ſounding marſh; And the plovers ſcattering o'er the heath,—and ſinging their wild notes to the liſtening waſte.*

I KNOW not, that the Naturaliſt or the Poet could by the choice of any other circumſtances, mark more ſtrikingly or more happily, either the cloſe of winter, or the opening of Spring. Horace ſays,

Solvitur acris hiems grata vice et veris Faveni:——

HOR. Ode 4. L. 1.

of which the language is poetical, but hardly the thought.

VIRGIL,

VIRGIL, indeed, has a thought which Thomson seems to have here carefully improved,

Vere novo, gelidus canis *quum* montibus humor Liquitur, *et Zephyro putris se gleba resolvit;* GEOR. I. 44.

BUT if Thomson have improved the imagery employed by former poets to mark the commencement of Spring; his personifications of Spring, and of Winter make, however, only a poor appearance, in comparison with the Peace and War of COLLINS, personified abstractions which one may naturally conceive to be not unlike Spring and Winter.

O thou, who bad'st thy turtles bear
Swift from his grasp thy golden hair,
And sought'st thy native skies;
When War by vultures drawn from far,
To Britain bent his iron car,
And bade his storms arise! Ode to Peace.

GRAY marks the opening of Spring, or rather a more advanced period in its progress, by a series of images luxuriously beautiful:

Lo! where the *rosy-bosom'd* * hours,
Fair Venus' train appear,
Disclose the long-expecting *flow'rs,*
And *wake the purpled year.*

THE late THOMAS WARTON, in his Ode on the first of April, has described the appearances which Spring,

* *Rosy-bosom'd* seems to be from Catullus; who has *roseis—papillis,* in his verses *ad Camerium.*

in its firſt opening, exhibits, with the accuracy of a naturaliſt examining the objects in nature with fond and curious attention;—and with the powers of a poet, able to ſtrengthen, in his imitations, the ordinary effect of the forms and colours of nature, on the human heart. But, to return to Thomſon.

THE doubtful conteſt between Winter and Spring ſoon terminates.

Th' expanſive atmoſphere————;
——full of life and vivifying ſoul,
Lifts the light clouds ſublime, and ſpreads them thin,
Fleecy and white, o'er all-ſurrounding Heaven.

Not only is the fact expreſſed in theſe lines correct, and the ſky which they preſent to the fancy of the poet and the painter, exquiſitely beautiful; but there is a ſublimity in the perſonification of the atmoſphere, and in the energy and exertion aſcribed to it, more elevating than the

——*ruit arduus æther*

of Virgil; and which naturally reminds the claſſical ſcholar of that idea in ancient philoſophy which, although it degraded the majeſty of the Deity, yet gave new grandeur to every object in the viſible world, by repreſenting God as corporeally diffuſed through all nature;

Jupiter eſt quodcunque vides, quocunque movebis.

CONTINUING his review of the events of the advancing Spring, the poet next ſkilfully animates his ſcenery by

by adverting to the labours in which the Season invites man to engage. It is a fine attitude in which he represents the husband-man,—*incumbent o'er the shining share,—to remove th' obstructing clay.* How natural! how pious! how poetical! the exclamation into which the poet breaks forth, at the sight of the labours of husbandry! These are some of those sentiments which constitute the soul of poetry. I am not sure, however, that the view of the works of husbandry is not here too slight to justify the transition immediately after made, to the *themes of Maro*, and the manners of ancient Greece and Rome. I wish I could persuade myself that the introduction of these in this particular place has not an air of pedantry. I must confess, that I think the address in which the poet next calls upon his countrymen to *venerate the plough*, happily introduced indeed, but feeble—all except the line with which it begins.

From the change which Spring happily produces on the temperature of the atmosphere, on the face of the sky, and by the influence of the kindlier air, on the soil, and the labours of man;—the transition is natural, to the renewed energy of Vegetation, a part of the subject still richer in delicate imagery. *The streaming* Power *of vegetation* is a noble personification; and how agreeable is this Power rendered by the diversity of hues in which he is arrayed!—What reader does not almost anticipate the poet in the apostrophe,——

 ——chiefly

———chiefly thee, gay Green!
Thou ſmiling nature's univerſal robe!

I ſhould have wiſhed, however, that, after the late mention of *various hues*, the epithet *univerſal* had been wanting.

NEVER has Deſcriptive Poetry preſented a finer landſcape, than in theſe lines:

From the moiſt meadow to the wither'd hill,
Led by the breeze, the vivid verdure runs,
And ſwells, and deepens to the cheriſh'd eye!

It is as if the range of the eye were, at once enlarged by the aid of the teleſcope, and every object magnified by the microſcope. All is ſo fully ſeen, yet ſo briefly deſcribed, that Deſcriptive Poetry ſeems here to aſſume, in ſome degree, the peculiar powers of the kindred Fine Arts of Painting and Ornamental Gardening. Equally happy is the exhibition of the change produced on the *foreſt, with its ruſtling deer*; and of the *Garden* in which the *prophetic* eye of the Poet ſees the *embryo*, lurking *within its crimſon folds*.

CONTRAST is one of the moſt powerful of thoſe laws by which the relations of our ideas and feelings, and the current of thought in the mind, are regulated. Nature operates, by means of this principle, many of her moſt maſterly effects on the human heart. Skill in the management of it, is indiſpenſibly neceſſary to the Artiſt who would move our feelings with any thing of the power of Nature. In the diſplay of ſcenery or of character,

racter, even in the connected enunciation of general truths, it is often moſt happily employed. Our poet is fortunate in his uſe of this principle here: for when fancy has viewed that richly coloured vegetation which he has deſcribed, what can be more natural than to reflect on

——————————the town,
Buried in ſmoke, in ſleep, and noiſome damps,

with an impatient wiſh to

————wander o'er the dewy fields,
Where freſhneſs breathes, and daſh the trembling drops
From the bent buſh, as through the verdant maze
Of ſweet-briar hedges, I purſue my walk;

How rich the proſpect from that eminence from which a wide extent of the ſurrounding country is ſeen; although the objects be but the ſame which we had lately viewed!

But, Spring is not unvaried mildneſs, beauty, and joy. The *calmmy mildew*, *untimely froſt*, and *inſect armies* from the *hazy North* often blaſt and conſume its bloſſoms, its foliage, and its embryo buds. Poetry often raiſes to ſublimity, yet without violating the truth of nature, objects which the vulgar mind would think, leaſt of all, ſuſceptible of it: ſuch as theſe *inſect armies*:

————————a feeble race! yet oft
The ſacred ſons of vengeance; on whoſe courſe
Corroſive famine waits, and kills the year.

But, it had been unſkilful to inveſt them in theſe terrific powers, had not the mind been previouſly prepared

pared to regard them with awe, by the repreſentation of their countleſs numbers, and their deſtructive progreſs. The following deſcription of the means uſed to deſtroy them is the firſt ſpecimen of the poet's didactic ſkill. The ſpecimen is a good one. It has the dignity of poetry; yet is at the ſame time correct and minute, as a rule dictated by an artizan. It is not liable to be burleſqued, like Virgil's *Nudus ara, ſere Nudus.*

A LONG ſeries of deſcription becomes unavoidably languid. It is therefore ſkilful in the Deſcriptive Poet to enliven and diverſify his ſcenes by occaſional effuſions of ſentiment, addreſſes, and directions; as thus,

Be patient, ſwains; theſe cruel-ſeeming winds
Blow not in vain, &c.

THE *Eaſt-wind*, and its train of miſchiefs are but tranſient in their blaſting influence on the beauties of Spring. The South wind riſes to heal the wounds which thoſe have made. The clouds and genial rains which it brings on, with their effects on vegetation, and on the ſentiments and feelings of man, and the inferior animals, are repreſented in one of the richeſt, the beſt-wrought, and the moſt intereſting pieces of painting in the whole poem.

How eaſy and artful the tranſition by which, after viewing the hues of the rain-bow,—the poet immediately exclaims,

Here, awful Newton! the diſſolving clouds
Form, fronting on the ſun, thy ſhowery priſm;

THE

THE contrast of the boy who,

——wondering, views the bright enchantment bend,

is equally happy. The poet thus detains the fancy in the survey of one of the most pleasing objects in nature; first describing the rain-bow; then varying that description by marking in what light it was viewed by science; and again exhibiting it, as it appears to the fond fancy of childish simplicity and ignorance.

THE *botanist* is introduced at a happy time, and on suitable scenes. His appearance was necessary to mark the advancement of vegetation, without a languid sameness of description. It is natural to join him in surveying those plants in the examination of which he is busied. And the retrospection is easy enough, upon those days, when plants are said to have afforded the only food of man. The description of the manners of those times seems to be drawn from the Greek and Roman poets, and in part from the Holy Scriptures. The manners and enjoyments which it exhibits, are sufficiently pleasing. But, the only very striking image is represented in the following lines:

This, when, emergent from the gloomy wood,
The glaring lion saw, his *horrid* * heart
Was meeken'd, and he join'd his sullen joy.

IN the contrasted representation of the character of society in the present times, we see Thomson's talent

* I am not sure that *horrid*, as used here, is not a Scotticism.

for moral declamation. The paſſions are perſonified, without allegoric imagery, and its peculiar ſentiment is juſtly enough attributed to each. The paſſage *is* noble; and the facts which it contains, are correct. But, if I am not greatly miſtaken, it would be, unleſs for the diction and the meaſure, more properly ornamented eloquence, than poetry. However, we cannot expect a compoſition of any length, to conſiſt of *pure poetry;* and ſuch paſſages as this are neceſſary for the connectives of particular images and ſentiments.

I FEAR that Critical Juſtice may regard the tranſition as awkward, by which the Deluge is ſoon after introduced. Nor does

A Shoreleſs ocean *tumbled* round the globe

ſeem to preſent a very happy image.

THE antediluvian times are finely deſcribed, and contraſted with the varying ſeverities of ſeaſon and climate, to which we are now expoſed,—in the verſes immediately following; but not without a pretty direct imitation of theſe lines in Virgil's ſecond Georgic,

———Zephyrique tepentibus auris,
Laxant arva ſinus: ſuperat tener omnibus humor;
Inque novos ſoles audent ſe germina tuto
Credere; nec metuit ſurgentis pampinus Auſtros,
Aut actum cælo magnis Aquilonibus imbrem:
Sed trudit gemmas, et frondis explicat omnes.
Non alios prima creſcentis origine mundi
Inluxiſſe dies, aliumve habuiſſe tenorem

Crediderim;

Crediderim; ver illud erat: ver magnus agebat
Orbis, et hibernis parcebant flatibus Euri:

It is probable that our poet has likewise in his eye, when describing the temperature of the Seasons, and the appearances of external nature in the Ancient World, Ovid's description of the Golden Age; as also some fine verses of Buchanan's, *In Calendas Maias*, which as I have not his book by me, I cannot set down here.

THE *Pythagorean* doctrine forbidding the use of animal food, is finely formed for the uses of the poet. Ovid has urged it in a series of beautifully pathetic verses; which are too well known to leave it proper for me to quote them, on this occasion. These Thomson has imitated; and I know not, if the imitation does not excel the original. It is one train of affecting imagery, and tender pathetic sentiment. It extends from verse 335th to the 375th. Few more powerful arguments than the following could be addressed to a feeling heart.

But *Man*, whom nature form'd of milder clay,
With every kind emotion in his heart,
And taught alone to weep; while from her lap
She pours ten thousand delicacies, herbs,
And fruits, as numerous as the drops of rain,
Or beams that gave them birth: shall he, fair form!
Who wears sweet smiles, and looks erect on heaven,

E'er

E'er ſtoop to mingle with the prowling herd,
And dip his tongue in gore?

It had been difficult to paint the effects of Spring upon the *waters*, otherwiſe than by the fine deſcription of Angling which our poet next introduces. It is however remarkable, that he who has reaſoned with ſo much earneſt pathos againſt the ſlaughter of animals, ſhould recommend, and deſcribe with a fond minuteneſs, a diverſion ſo inhuman as angling, in which an animal dies by each ſucceſsful throw of the line. Yet, he is humane amid the inhumanity of a diverſion, which one might almoſt gueſs to have been a favourite with him.

But, let not, on thy hook the tortur'd worm,
Convulſive, twiſt in agonizing folds;
Which, by rapacious hunger ſwallow'd deep
Gives, as you tear it from the bleeding breaſt
Of the weak, helpleſs, uncomplaining wretch,
Harſh pain and horrour to the tender hand.

Again,

If yet too young, and eaſily deceiv'd,
A worthleſs prey ſcarce bends your pliant rod,
Him, piteous of his youth, and the ſhort ſpace
He has enjoyed the vital light of Heaven,
Soft diſengage, and back into the ſtream
The ſpeckled captive throw.

The whole deſcription of the angling is intereſting and poetical. Yet, I am inclined to call it *pretty* rather

ther than beautiful. The ſalmon indeed, by the art which is neceſſary with him, and the force and fury which he exerts, gives to angling employed againſt him, ſomewhat of the dignity of the Chaſe.

THE amuſements recommended to the man of fancy, between verſe 437th and verſe 464th are ſuch as the poet himſelf muſt have often enjoyed; otherwiſe, he could not have been ſo well qualified to paint the beauties of the Seaſons.—With what ſkill does he, amid the deſcription of theſe amuſements, ſelect a particular proſpect, and after perhaps too much preamble, proceed to repreſent it to the imagination; while the fancied preſence of his Amanda gives new energy to his genius, and arrays in more glowing colours every object in the groupe.

THE view of the beauties of Nature will readily elevate to the admiration of their Author, every mind not void of ſenſibility, yet pure from guilty paſſions. Having, then, ſeen winter yield to Spring; having ſeen Spring ſoften the inclemency of the air, unbind the ſtiffened ſoil, diffuſe new life and beauty through the vegetable world, call man and the other animals to new labours and new pleaſures: The poet naturally breaks out, with rapture, and exclaims, *Hail, Source of Being! &c.*

AND who would not paſſionately join him, if not inſenſible to the beauties of nature, or incapable of being taught to trace order and beauty to their firſt Cauſe?

Riſing

Rising from the vegetable world, the poet next leads us to view those effects of Spring on the lower Animals, which are most strikingly apparent, and which most readily receive poetical embellishment. The *Passion of the groves* cannot be an unpleasing theme. The trimming of their plumage; the eager chearfulness of their notes; the playfulness with which male and female approach each other: and at last their retreat by mutual consent, to the deep groves, are the circumstances which mark the loves and the courtship of the more delicate among the winged tribes. How much happy imagery, intermingled with such tender sentiments as we can naturally ascribe to those among the inferior creation who seem to be the most susceptible of sentiments like our own,—do these afford to the poet? How skilfully he chuses the situations for their nests? How happy the œconomy with which they form their nests, and feed their young?—Here again is the union of the Naturalist with the Poet remarkably apparent. The whole narration is correct, as if delineated by a naturalist after the most careful observation; and is at the same time, made up of such a mixture of those soft images which one views with delight, and of tender sentiments in which one sympathizes with fondness. as, in a very high degree, to please and interest the mind. In the book of *Job*, and in some passages in the *Psalms*, some parts of this œconomy of the inferior

inferior animals. and among the others, of the winged tribes, are indeed represented with greater majesty.

Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacock? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich? which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust; and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them—Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey; and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: And where the slain are, there is she. Job. Chap. 39.

No images taken from the œconomy of fowls can be more exquisitely tender than these in the eighty-fourth Psalm:

Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of Hosts!

But in these instances, poetry and philosophy being intermingled with devotion and with religious instruction, acquire by the union, a dignity and tenderness of which they are otherwise unsusceptible. Still more exquisite is that prosopopeia, in which the Saviour of the world ardently expresses his tender concern for the Jews: *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thy children together,—even as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings; and ye would not!*—

The

THE *Pervigilium Veneris*, that exquiſite, little poem, aſcribed by ſome to Catullus, affords a fine, although ſhort deſcription of the genial effects of Spring, on the vegetable and the animal creation; from which Virgil probably took ſome hints, in his ſecond Georgic; and which, although Thomſon have not here cloſely imitated, yet he muſt certainly have had it in his eye. It has in it leſs of the accuracy of the naturaliſt, but a more glowing, poetical colouring, than Thomſon has here exhibited. It is too long to be inſerted in this place; but may be found at the end of moſt editions of the works of Catullus.

WITH happy ſkill, and in the natural train of that flow of ſentiment which ſeems to have been congenial to his mind; Thomſon paſſes, by the relation of reſemblance, from viewing the parental tenderneſs of the winged pairs, to the ſtill fonder, more anxious, more melting tenderneſs of a father and mother among mankind:

———————. Even ſo, a gentle pair,
By fortune ſunk, but form'd of generous mould,
And charm'd with cares beyond the vulgar breaſt,
In ſome lone cote amid the diſtant woods,
Suſtain'd alone by providential HEAVEN,
Oft, as they weeping eye their infant train,
Check their own appetites, and give them all.

THE boldneſs with which the moſt timid of fowls ſeem to be inſpired, and the artifices which even the moſt ſimple among them are ſeen to practiſe, when engaged in the care of their young, afford happy ſcope

to

to the ſkill and fancy of the poet. Humanity liſtens with ſympathy, with ſorrow, with indignation, while he laments parental tenderneſs, ſo fond, ſo pious, bereft of the objects of its care, and pathetically reprobates the ſelfiſh confinement of the pretty warblers;—only to gratify caprice and luxury with their diſconſolate ſong!

Dull are the pretty ſlaves, their plumage dull,
Ragged, and all its brightening luſtre loſt;
Nor is that ſprightly wildneſs in their notes,
Which, clear and vigorous, warbles from the beech.

How exquiſitely does he touch the delicacy, the tender affection, and the melodious ſorrow of the nightingale? When

Th' aſtoniſh'd mother finds a vacant neſt,

———————————————

———, to the ground, the vain proviſion fails.
Her pinions ruffle, and low-drooping, ſcarce
Can bear the mourner to the poplar ſhade,
Where all abandon'd to deſpair, ſhe ſings
Her ſorrows through the night; and on the bough,
Sole ſitting, ſtill at every dying fall,
Takes up again her lamentable ſtrain
Of winding woe;————————

HARDLY leſs intereſting is the ſeries of verſes in which the poet proceeds to deſcribe the parting ſcene between the parent-fowls and their young, and the fears, the boldneſs, the awkwardneſs, the dexterity

with

with which the youngling makes its attempts to fly. There is sublimity in the scene, *on utmost Kilda's shore*, between the parent eagle, and his parting young.

THE *loves of the quadrupeds* are imitated directly from Virgil, to whom our poet is in this instance undeniably inferior. The passage in Virgil to which I allude, extends between the 208th and the 285th verses of his third Georgic, and well deserves to be compared with this of Thomson, by the classical scholar; but is too long to be here quoted.——Our poet skilfully enough, hints at, and only hints at the effects of the same genial influence on *the monsters of the deep*. The sportive cheerfulness to which it prompts the gentler flocks, prettily adorns and enlivens the scene where he represents them gamboling round their shepherd.

AGAIN the Author, sensible to the natural impression of his subject, intermingles with his poetry, warm effusions of piety;

What is this mighty breath, ye sages, say,
That, in a powerful language, felt, not heard,
Instructs the fowls of heaven, and thro' their breasts
These arts of love diffuses? what but GOD:——

NOT less pleasing nor less instructive is he, when singing the influence which the phænomena of Spring naturally have, to soften and rejoice the human heart, to inspire it with pleasing feelings, and benignant dispositions. None can disapprove of his introducing here, so worthy, so amiable a character, as was *George*,

Lord

Lord Lyttleton; the votary of poesy, the advocate of Christianity, the friend of literary genius, an eminent historian, as an orator not less eminent, an upright minister, a pious peer! The poem is adorned by the appearance of so excellent a character.

THE effects of love on the human species are the next subjects of the poet's description, and certainly the most interesting part of the whole. The beauty by which love is attracted; the emotions in which it arises; the tumults with which it agitates the breast; the caprices, the wild fancies, the restless anxiety which it produces, afford happy scope to the powers of the poet. It is however remarkable, that Thomson is not here roused to pour forth any thing of tender sentiment. All is description. The description is indeed rich, highly coloured, and yet delicate. But, does it impress the fancy, does it speak to the feelings, with aught of the affecting power of the letters of Julia and St Preux in the first volumes of *Rousseau's* Novel? of the maddened effusions of Werter, in the well-known work of *Goethe?* Or of the impassioned sentiments of Eloisa, in the letter written for her by *Pope*, to Abelard?—No.—It is however as much superior to what Virgil says on the same subject, as inferior to these: Although even Virgil is admirable:

Quid juvenis, magnum cui versat in ossibus ignum
Durus amor? nempe abruptis turbata procellis
Nocte natat cœca serus freta; quem super ingens

Porta

Porta tonat cæli, et ſcopulis enliſa reclamant
Æquora, nec miſeri poſſunt revocare parentes,
Nec moritura ſuper crudeli funere virgo.

In his ſixth and tenth Eclogues, however, Virgil has better diſtinguiſhed himſelf as the poet of deeply impaſſioned love. The deſcriptive love ode of Sappho is univerſally known and admired. Horace ſeems to have had little knowledge of love, except as a ſportive, ſenſual paſſion.

The praiſe of virtuous, conjugal love, and of the pleaſing duties of the conjugal and the parental character, are, rather *eloquence* than *poetry;* except in ſo far as thy may be conſtituted poetry by the *diction* and the *meaſure*. They do, however contain a mixture of impaſſioned ſentiments, with ſome particular images; although theſe are not in ſuch abundance, as the nature of poetry ſeems to demand. They form a fine cloſe to a poem celebrating the *appearances* and the *emotions* produced by Spring.

Such, then, is Thomſon's Spring, whether conſidered as a ſeparate poem, or as a *part* of One Whole, comprehending Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. The poet appears to have ſkilfully ſelected all, or almoſt the moſt poetical of the *Images* peculiar to this Seaſon. Of the *Sentiments* ſuggeſted or inſpired by it, here is perhaps a deficiency. Of the lofty or gorgeous, allegorical Imagery which it might have taught fancy to create, he gives little. But, beginning

with

with its earlieſt effects, he views it ſmoothing and lighting up the face of Heaven; Warming the temperature of the air; Relaxing the ſtiffened coheſion of the ſoil; Calling forth the animated growth, and the vivid colours of vegetation; Renewing the cheerful labours of man; Diffuſing through all nature, delicate beauty, tender joy, and rapturous love. The Epiſodical digreſſions are ſuch as accord well with the ſubject. They are all allied to it, either by the relation of Contraſt, or by that of Reſemblance: They introduce ſcenes, ſentiments, and characters, which the mind is pleaſed to contemplate, and to compare with thoſe which occur in the neceſſary train of the ſubject. Where we can trace parallel ſentiments and images in the works of other poets, we find Thomſon almoſt always either an unequalled Original, or a very ſkilful imitator. But, after all, I muſt confeſs, that I ſhould not have been diſpleaſed, if Thomſon had been leſs diffuſe in his retroſpection to the Antediluvian world; and had traced the influence of Spring in thoſe climates where its effects are more ſudden, and its energy more vigorous, than in theſe temperate regions. Might he not have happily enough introduced the ſplendours, and the horrors of an opening, military campaign?

THE tenderneſs and delicacy of Spring are inſenſibly matured into the vigorous luxuriance of SUMMER. The beauties of the vegetable world become more gariſh and ſplendid. Light ſtreams on the face of nature

with

with ſuch fullneſs; heat, with ſuch force, as to overpower, at times, both animals and vegetables, with what might otherwiſe, only tend to nouriſh and invigorate them. Animals become more languid in their exertions. The temperate aſſume ſomewhat of the character of the torrid. This is the ſeaſon, when nature ſeeming to offer to man, to the full, every ſenſual joy that ſhe has to beſtow, tells him, at the ſame time, that ſenſual joy deſtroys the organs, enfeebles the faculties, and diſappoints the wiſhes which it is ſought to gratify.

SUMMER, well-deſcribed by our Poet, as *coming, refulgent, from brightening fields of æther; in pride of youth; attended by the ever-fanning breezes*, and *ſultry hours;* with *ardent look*, attracts more particular notice, and is a figure that the Painter would eaſier delineate, than Spring, as Spring was pictured in the invocation in which ſhe was invited to deſcend. But, Spring here repreſented, retiring before the preſence of Summer; *averting her bluſhful face; and leaving earth and ſkies, all-ſmiling, to his hot dominion*, is yet more intereſting than when ſhe *deſcended from the boſom of yon dropping cloud.*

How cool! how gelid! how grateful to fancy, while the feelings are oppreſſed with torrid heat, the ſcene to which the poet chuſes to retire, when about to ſing the glories of Summer's reign!

Rura mihi, et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;

Flumina

Flumina amem ſilvaſque inglorius. O, ubi campi,
Spercheoſque, et virginibus bacchata Lacœnis
Taygeta: O, qui me gelidis in vallibus Hœmi
Siſtat, et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!

Virg. Georg. II.

The wiſh is in theſe verſes more ardent, but the ſcene leſs diſtinctly marked, than when Thomſon ſays,

Hence, let me haſte into the mid-wood ſhade,
Where ſcarce a ſun-beam wanders thro' the gloom;
And on the dark-green graſs, beſide the brink
Of haunted ſtream, that, by the roots of oak,
Rolls o'er the rocky-channel, ly at large,
And ſing the glories of the circling year,

Gray, in his Elegy, ſeems to fancy himſelf in a ſimilar ſcene,

Oft by the ſide of yonder nodding beech,
That rears its old, fantaſtic roots ſo high,
His liſtleſs length, at noontide would he ſtretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

And in one of his Odes, out of which I have already inſerted a quotation;

Now, where the oak's thick branches ſtretch
A broader, browner ſhade;
Or where the rude and moſs-grown beech
O'ercanopies the glade;
Beſide ſome water's ruſhy brink,
With me the muſe ſhall ſit and think,
At eaſe reclin'd, in ruſtic ſtate.

Theſe ſcenes which Gray has choſen for poetic and philoſophic meditation, amid the noontide heats of Summer are leſs pleaſing than the receſs to which Thomſon haſtes, yet reſemble it ſo nearly, that one would almoſt ſuſpect Gray to be here the imitator of Thomſon, were he not well-known to be too ſcrupulous in theſe matters, to have knowingly imitated any other poet, without confeſſing the imitation.

Inſpiration is admirably repreſented by our poet, with *fix'd ſerious eye, and raptur'd glances ſhot on ſurrounding heaven.*

THE ſeaſon, when light is poured over the world in all its radiance, more naturally than any other, raiſes the mind to contemplate, and to meditate on the glories of the planetary world.

THE aſpect of nature on the ſummer morn is finely deſcribed by the poet, with ſome of the happieſt ſtrokes of that magic pencil which ſeems to have been beſtowed hardly on any, beſide him;

———young Day pours in apace,
And opens all the lawny proſpect wide.
The dripping rock, the mountain's miſty top,
Swell on the ſight, and brighten with the dawn.
Blue thro' the duſk, the ſmoking currents ſhine;
And from the bladed field, the fearful hare
Limps awkward: while along the foreſt glade
The wild deer trip, and often turning gaze
At early paſſenger. Muſic awakes

The

The native voice of undiſſembled joy;
And thick around, the woodland hymns ariſe.
Rous'd by the cock, the ſoon-clad ſhepherd leaves
His moſſy cottage, where with peace he dwells;
And from his crowded fold, in order, drives
His flock, to taſte the verdure of the noon.

These images are pleaſing. None of them, it is allowed, are pictured with any very expreſſive, or very delicate ſtrokes of the pencil. But they delight the imagination with a very agreeable groupe of objects, and a ſweetly placid ſcene. Noon is often the beſt part of a day in Spring; but, morning and evening are the parts of the Summer day, the moſt refreſhing to vegetation, and the moſt grateful to the feelings of man and moſt other animals. The beauties of the morning naturally ſuggeſt the fine exclamation which follows, againſt that ſloth which often withholds human beings from this ſcene of joy, which nature decorates and enlivens for their entertainment. Sleep is poetically deſcribed as being either a ſtate of *dead oblivion*,

Or elſe to feveriſh vanity alive,
Wildered, and toſſing through diſtemper'd dreams.

Neceſſary reſt may be what Dr Young poetically name sit,

Tir'd Nature's kind reſtorer,——

But, ſleep indolently courted, after it has already afforded the needed refreſhment, has a tendency to relax the body, and deaden the energies of the mind.

Dreams

Dreams are ſometimes pleaſing; but ſeldom thoſe dreams which ariſe upon the imagination, when one is only half-aſleep. The ancients who looked into dreams for predictions of futurity, uſed to regard morning-dreams as the moſt certainly prophetic; for what reaſon, I know not; unleſs poſſibly, becauſe, thoſe dreams, being rather waking reveries, turn more upon realities, than the dreams of deeper ſleep.

PAINTING could not more expreſſively repreſent the riſing ſun's appearance, than the poet, when he marks it by

———————. The leſſening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountains brow
Illum'd with fluid gold,———————

THE ſeaſon of the year, and time of the day, and the appearance of the moſt ſplendid luminary of Heaven concur all to lead the poet to break out in the noble hymn to Light which he next introduces. And Light is beſt celebrated in the Sun, to us its material ſource and centre. How many ſentiments of poetic and philoſophic admiration does this ſubject prompt! How nobly is the Sun's *beaming car*, attended by the *Seaſons* leading in

———the roſy-finger'd *hours*,
The *zephyrs* floating looſe, the timely *rains*,
Of bloom ethereal, the light-footed *dews*,
And ſoften'd into joy, the ſurly *ſtorms*.

Here are a groupe of allegorical perſonages, which, if the

the lines, the colours, the lights, the ſhades, the arts of arrangement and of perſpective, which *painting* has to employ, could pourtray them with any thing of truth, order, and grace, would form one of the moſt fanciful, the moſt beauteous, and the moſt wildly grand aſſemblages ever yet exhibited on canvas.

——————————leafy woods,
Her liberal treſſes,——————————

It might have been better, if the poet had not taken the pains to inform us here, that *leafy woods* are *the treſſes* of the earth. They neither adorn the earth more nor become by themſelves more beautiful, nor do the more honour to the Sun's influence, for being thus repreſented. Had the earth been otherwiſe perſonified, and others of its parts or productions aſſimilated to the human form, there might have been leſs impropriety in calling the woods its hair. In the preſent caſe, I think the compariſon burleſque.

————The Diamond which
Dares, as it ſparkles on the fair one's breaſt,
With vain ambition, emulate her eyes,

makes too affectedly pretty an appearance to have its ambition celebrated here, without impropriety in the poet. I am, in truth, ſurpriſed, that Thomſon ſhould have been betrayed to admit here any thing ſo incongruous as the glittering compliments of frivolous gallantry. All the precious ſtones are moſt poetically characteriſed.—One almoſt ſees, as the poet deſcribes it,

——The

——————The precipice abrupt
Projecting horrour on the blacken'd flood,
Soften at *the Sun's* return.

PERHAPS the nobleſt of all the beautiful thoughts which have occurred to human fancy, is contained in theſe lines; in which the poet ſays of the Deity,

Whoſe ſingle ſmile has, from the firſt of time,
Fill'd, overflowing, all thoſe lamps of Heaven,
That beam for ever, thro' the boundleſs ſky.

BUT, human language is inadequate to expreſs this thought in all its grandeur and beauty. The words *ſmile* and *lamp* ſeem to have ſomewhat of a burleſque effect.

How agreeable, how improving a companion the poet, whoſe poetry riſes, every now and then, into devotion!

THOMSON in the lines which follow,

To me be nature's volume broad diſplay'd, &c.

has imitated, without equalling theſe lines of Virgil,

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Muſæ,
Quarum ſacra fero, ingenti perculſus amore,
Adcipiant; cælique vias, et ſidera monſtrent:
Defectus ſolis varios, lunæque labores:
Unde tremor terris: qua vi maria alta tumeſcant
Objicibus ruptis, rurſuſque in ſe ipſa reſidant:
Quid tantum Oceano properent ſe tingere ſoles
Hiberni, vel quæ tardis mora noctibus obſtat.
Sin has ne poſſim naturæ adcedere partes,
Frigidus obſtiterit circum præcordia ſanguis;

Rua

Rura mihi, et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;
Flumina amem, ſilvaſque inglorius.———

It is the ardour of philoſophical and poetical enthuſiaſm breathed in theſe fine verſes, rather than any particular images or particular ſentiments contained in them, which conſtitutes their excellence. But, in Thomſon's lines neither is there the ſame fervour of enthuſiaſm, nor ſuch a ſucceſſion of impreſſive imagery.

I wish, I could praiſe our poet when he ſpeaks of the—Tyrant Heat, *diſpreading:* He ſeems not to have reflected, that, having once perſonified Heat, he could not, without violating propriety, afterwards ſpeak of its diffuſing itſelf, as a ſubtile, natural body.

But, the following lines, the imagery, the ſentiments, the pathetic tenderneſs with which they are filled, are too affecting not to force us to forgive or overlook ſmaller imperfections;

Who can unpitying ſee the flowery race,
Shed by the morn, their new-fluſh'd bloom reſign,
Before the parching beam? So fade the fair,
When fevers revel through their azure-veins.

The languor which overpowers all the domeſtic animals in the noon of the Summer day is well deſcribed by our poet. He lays them in intereſting groupes; and marks their feelings and characters by acts which they perform in very pictureſque attitudes. The inſects do well. But, I wiſh, that they had led him in imagination to thoſe ſcenes, where inſects are more

powerful, more wonderful, more interesting, more beauteous, more terrific, more sublime in their operations. The spider, and the groupe about him are admirable.

But the verses most worthy of Thomson's genius are the following;

Resounds the living surface of the ground:
Nor undelightful is the ceaseless hum,
To him who muses through the woods at noon;
Or drowsy shepherd, as he lyes reclin'd,
With half-shut eyes, beneath the floating shade
Of willows grey, close-crowding o'er the stream.

Here are sentiments worthy of the poet's heart, observations and images worthy of his eye and his fancy. It is pleasing, too, to wander with him through the inferior insect world; as if one were endowed with microscopic eye,——*T' inspect a mite, not comprehend the Heaven.*

The moralist and the poet speak happily together in these verses:

Thick in yon stream of light, a thousand ways,
Upward, and downward, thwarting, and convolv'd,
The quivering nations sport, till tempest-wing'd,
Fierce winter sweeps them from the face of day.
Even so luxurious Men unheeding pass
An idle summer-life, in fortune's shine.

Not unlike to these are the following beautiful verses of Gray:

The

The insect tribe are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honeyed spring,
And bask amid the liquid noon:
Some idly with the current skim,
Some gayly shew their gilded trim,
Quick-glancing to the sun.
Methinks, I hear the sportive kind,
In accents low reply,
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly;
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage, to display,
On hasty wings thy youth is flown,
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone;
We frolic, while 'tis *May*.

In Gray, as in Thomson, we see the moralist and the poet meet. But Gray mingles with the reflexions of the moralist, some expression of what he felt, when comparing the light cares, the frivolous joys, the sportive sentiments of the gay world, with his own condition. He affects to be gay; but, his gaiety is that of wounded pride which disdains the condescension of complaint.

The party of haymakers are an interesting groupe. The scene is finely pictur'd. Nor less pleasing, or less reasonably introduced is the description of the washing of the sheep, which follows. In these lines, the poet utters a sentiment, which without any thing of form,

colour, or attitude expreſſed with it, gives however, to the imagination a fine image: And it is ſtill better to preſent the ſentiment, that the imagination may create the correſponding image, than to exhibit the image, and leave it to awake a correſpondent ſentiment.

How meek, how patient the mild creature lies!
What ſoftneſs in its melancholy face,
What dumb, complaining innocence appears!
Fear not, ye gentle tribes, 'tis not the knife
Of horrid ſlaughter that is o'er you wav'd;——

The poet ſkilfully contrives to give dignity to the lowly ſimplicity of the waſhing and ſhearing of ſheep which he has juſt deſcribed, by reminding us in elevated language, that the *woollen* is the ſtaple manufacture of Britain, and connecting the idea of it with our national ſtrength and glory.

THE torrid heat of noon is next admirably marked by a train of happy images, and by the burſting exclamations of oppreſſed ſenſation.

And ſcarce a chirping graſhopper is heard
Thro' the dumb mead.————

is one of thoſe nice facts which none but a poet would heed, and which are pleaſing above all others, to the fancy——*Diſtreſsful Nature pants*——is nobly pathetic. But, I think that what follows, tends to throw ridicule on the diſtreſs:

The very ſtreams look languid from afar;
Or, thro' th' unſhelter'd glade, impatient, ſeem
To hurl into the covert of the grove,

The

The following apoſtrophe ariſes naturally, and is highly poetical in its tenor. Some parts of the ſentiments introduced by it have been anticipated in the beginning of the Poem. It is charming to attend the poet into the depth of the foreſt. *Delicious to the ſoul* is the *ſhelter* of the *wild aſhes*, the *lofty pines*, the *venerable oaks*; —*Cool, thro' the nerves*, their *pleaſing comfort glides*;

The heart beats glad; the freſh expanded eye
And ear reſume their watch; the ſinews knit;
And life ſhoots ſwift thro' all the lighten'd limbs.

The inferior animals are, like man, oppreſſed by the torrid heat, and like him, retire from it, to ſhelter themſelves in the ſhade, or rather to lave in the ſtream. The ox ſtung by the gadfly, diſcovers an irritation and a daring activity which throw him into noble attitudes, and render him unuſually intereſting. But, much more ſo is the horſe, rouſed by ſimilar keenneſs of feeling. He is indeed a noble creature, as exhibited in theſe lines:

Oft in this ſeaſon, too, the horſe, provok'd,
While his big ſinews full of ſpirits ſwell,
Trembling with vigour, in the *heat of blood*,
Springs the high fence, and o'er the field effus'd,
Darts on the gloomy flood, with ſtedfaſt eye,
And heart eſtrang'd to fear: his nervous cheſt
Luxuriant, and erect, the ſeat of ſtrength!
Bears down th' oppoſing ſtream, quenchleſs his thirſt,
He takes the river at redoubled draughts;
And *with wide noſtrils, ſnorting*, ſkims the wave.

YET, this is inferior to Virgil, where he describes the horse under the influence of the genial passion.

Nonne vides, ut tota *tremor pertentat* equorum
Corpora, si tantum *notas odor adtulit auras?*
Ac neque eos jam frena virum, neque verbera sæva,
Non scopuli, rupesque cavæ, atque objecta retardant
Flumina, conreptosque unda torquentia montis.

Still nobler is the famous appearance of the horse in the thirty-ninth chapter of the book of Job; for Thomson and Virgil have only exhibited this animal in various grand and picturesque attitudes; but, in Job he is not only shewn in attitudes more dignified; sentiments highly magnanimous are also ascribed to him.——— *Hast thou given the horse strength, &c.*

IT is pleasing to proceed onward with the poet into the gloomiest depth of the grove. How much more amiable the divine forms which his rapt fancy there beholds, than those which savage superstition has often seated in such recesses! These lines transport the reader to all the elevation of the poet's fancy;

Shook sudden from the bosom of the sky,
A thousand shapes, or glide athwart the dusk,
Or stalk majestic on.———————

In the same spirit does he open his noble ode to the Æolian Harp;

Æthereal race! inhabitants of air!
Who hymn your God amid the silent grove,
Ye unseen beings, to my harp repair,
And raise majestic songs, or melt in love.

The

The mingled rapture of poetic and pious contemplation, however aided by wild muſic, can hardly riſe higher than in theſe verſes of the ſame ode;

Methinks, I hear the full, celeſtial choir,
With one loud voice, their awful anthems raiſe;
Now chanting clear; and now they all conſpire
To raiſe the lofty hymn from praiſe to praiſe!

WITH a power and an elevation of fancy ſomewhat ſimilar, are viſionary forms of a different character, introduced in the following ſtanza of a little *Ode to the Moon*, which I have ſeen in manuſcript:

In more *terrific* garb *array'd*,
Oft *burſting* from ſome *hallow'd ſhade*,
Dread ghoſts have *ſtalk'd acroſs the plain*;
The *midnight murd'rer's ſteps* to *haunt*,
To bid the *breaſt* with *horrour pant*,
That would thy ſacred light profane.

No ſeaſon could be happier for paying a tribute to the memory of a deceaſed friend or miſtreſs, than when the ſoul is thus rapt to Heaven, and ſaints and angels ſeem to hover round;

And, art thou, *Stanley*, of that ſacred band!
Alas! for us too ſoon!————————
At length, ————————the ſound
Of a near fall of water, every ſenſe
Wakes from the charm of thought:———

The deſcription of the waterfall is pictureſque and fanciful.

How nobly ſuperior to the other winged tribes, the eagle! who, while they *droop diſorder'd, deep in the thicket;*

Invited from the cliff, to whoſe dark brow,
He clings,————————————ſoars,
With upward pinions, thro' the flood of day;
And giving his full boſom to the blaze,
Gains on the ſun;————————

Here again is another moſt delicately painted ſcene. Twice already has the poet choſen ſuch, to refreſh and ſhelter him amid the heats. But, this is the moſt charming that can well be conceived.

Beſide the dewy border, let me ſit,
All in the freſhneſs of the humid air;
There, in that hollow'd rock, groteſque and wild,
An ample chair, moſs-lin'd, and over head,
By flowering umbrage ſhaded; where the bee
Strays diligent, and with th' extracted balm
Of fragrant woodbine, loads his little thigh.

Here does the poet chuſe to recline, while he ſends out fancy excurſive, to——*view the wonders of the torrid zone.*——The gems, the woods, the fruits of theſe regions are ſubjects equally pleaſing and elevating to the imagination oppreſſed, with the ſenſes, by the burning heats amid which they are produced. There is a grandeur in the ſolitary ſcenes, where *nought is ſeen,*

But the wild herds that own no maſter's ſtall;—

On

On whoſe luxuriant herbage, half-conceal'd,
Like a fallen cedar, far-diffuſed his train,
Cas'd in green ſcales, the Crocodile extends.

THOMSON ſpeaks, with his uſual correctneſs, as to facts in Natural Hiſtory, when he likens the Crocodile to a *fallen cedar*.

" The Indians, ſays Father Navarette, began to cry out, *Caiman*, *Caiman*, that is, *Alligator*, *Alligator*. I looked all about, and ſaw him not; they pointed at him, and yet I was not ſatisfied. The truth was, I ſaw him; but he being ſo vaſtly big, I could not perſuade myſelf, that it was an alligator, or that there were any ſo large in the world, as what they ſhewed me. We drew nearer; and then I diſcovered and diſtinguiſhed him: He lay aſleep upon a little iſland of ſand, at the mouth of the river; and I thought him *as big as the main maſt of a good ſhip;* and before, I thought, that bulk *had been ſome tree carried thither* by the ſtream of that great river.—Churchill's Voyages; 3d edit. vol. 1ſt, p. 219.

Behemoth is leſs majeſtic here, than in the book of Job. But, without cloſely copying the picture, it was impoſſible to repreſent him in the ſame dignity in which he there appears;———*Behold now Behemoth; which I made with thee. He eateth graſs*, &c. Job, chap. 40.

THE *Leviathan*, plainly the *crocodile*, is, immediately after, deſcribed and characteriſed with equal grandeur and energy, by the ſacred poet.

THE elephant is ſkilfully introduced by Thomſon, but characteriſed with little energy. I ſhould have been pleaſed, if our poet had given the portraits of one or two of thoſe birds of the torrid zone whoſe gaudineſs of plumage he celebrates—Why not paint the Condor?—Had the South Sea iſlands been viſited at the time when he wrote, we ſhould undoubtedly have had ſome charming *Otaheitean* ſcenes. He might have made more of Abyſſinia, if he could have read LOBO or BRUCE.

THE lamentation over the ſtate of human ſociety in thoſe regions in America, and in other countries within the torrid zone, where vegetative nature is more luxuriant, and where the largeſt and moſt impetuous of the inferior animals are produced—is philoſophically pathetic. The GREEN SERPENT is well deſcribed. But, in Letters, publiſhed under the fictitious ſignature of HECTOR ST JOHN, AN AMERICAN FARMER, is a deſcription of a combat between two ſnakes, much more poetical. The tyger, the leopard, the hyæna,—the lion,—*their ſhaggy king*, are all very well. Only, I wiſh that our poet could have taken his idea of the lion in his native ſeats, from Sparrmann! The contraſt, however, of the ferocity of the ſavage animals with the terrour which they impreſs upon man, and upon the gentle timidity of the domeſtic animals is truly admirable—

——————The fearful flocks
Crowd near the guardian ſwain; the nobler herds

Where

Where round their lordly bull, in rural eaſe,
They ruminating ly, with horror hear
The coming rage. Th' awaken'd village, ſtarts;
And to her fluttering breaſt, the mother ſtrains
Her thoughtleſs infant. From the Pirate's den
Or ſtern Morocco's tyrant fang eſcap'd,
The wretch half-wiſhes for his bonds again:——

The laſt ſentiment particularly is exquiſitely fancied.

WITH no leſs ſkill is he introduced, who has been deſerted by the companions of his voyage in ſome lonely iſland. Nor is the diſtreſs of his ſituation leſs poetically deſcribed. Yet, ſtill, Thomſon only deſcribes, without knowing how to breathe impaſſioned ſentiments.

COOPER's verſes in the name of Alexander Selkirk are more affecting. Among theſe, the following ſpeak to the heart.

I am out of ſociety's reach;
I muſt finiſh my journey, alone;
Never hear the ſweet muſic of ſpeech;
I ſtart at the ſound of my own.

Society, friendſhip, and love,
So kindly beſtowed upon man!
O, had I the wings of a dove,
How ſoon would I taſte you again!

O ye winds! that have me your ſport,
Convey to this deſolate ſhore,

Some tender, endearing report
Of a land I muſt viſit no more!

———————————

My friends! do they now and then ſend
A thought or a wiſh after me?
Oh! tell me, I yet have a friend;
Though a friend I am never to ſee.

Paſſion here ſpeaks in the ordinary abſtract language of calm converſation: not in the abrupt, interjective ſtyle peculiar to itſelf, or by the uſe of imagery: Yet, ſo much greater a power have ſentiments over the heart, than images, however beautiful, however grand, however ſtrikingly marked; that I, for my part, cannot help being much more affected by theſe lines of Cooper, than by the following very fine moving picture of Thomſon's;

Day after day, ſad on the jutting eminence he ſits,
And views the main that ever toils below;
Still fondly forming, in the fartheſt verge,
Where the round æther mixes with the wave,
Ships, dim diſcover'd, dropping from the clouds;
At evening to the ſetting ſun he turns
A mournful eye, and down his dying heart
Sinks helpleſs;————————

Our poet next mentions briefly, but with poetic dignity and pictureſque power, ſome of the moſt extraordinary phænomena of the winds in Africa, and in the South-weſt of Aſia:—the *Samiel* or rather *Simoom*, —and the flitting ſands. Of theſe phænomena he might

might have made a much nobler uſe, had he known them, as they have been ſince deſcribed to us by BRUCE and ſome other travellers. Another phænomenon of which he might have finely availed himſelf, is, that magnifying quality, as a medium of viſion, which the air of thoſe regions has been obſerved to poſſeſs, in a certain ſtate; and by which objects of moderate ſize, are, to the eye, at times enlarged to the moſt gigantic magnitude.

THE impatience at the delay of the buried caravan is finely expreſſed:

——————. In Cairo's crowded ſtreets
Th' impatient merchant, wondering, waits in vain;
And Mecca ſaddens at the long delay.

THE ſtorms which our poet next deſcribes, appear arrayed in all their real horrours. Nothing could be more ſkilful than the art with which DI GAMA is introduced amid theſe ſtorms; ſince Di Gama was one of the firſt European ſailors who boldly and ſucceſsfully braved them.

With ſuch mad ſeas the daring *Gama* fought
For many a day, and many a dreadful night;
Inceſſant, lab'ring, round the ſtormy *Cape*
By bold ambition led, and bolder thirſt
Of Gold.——————

IN ſpeaking of the *ſhark*, I cannot but think, that Thomſon might have given us more powerful and impreſſive painting.—*The ſtormy fates deſcend*—is unworthy of him.

SOON after, however, to atone for this, follows one of the moſt exquiſite ſtrokes of art, of fancy, of feeling, that poetry has to boaſt of. It has been too warmly admired by my maſters in criticiſm, BLAIR and the WARTONS, to leave it poſſible for me to do the poet any honour by my paſſionate ſuffrage in its favour.—The poet has ſpoken of the *peſtilent diſeaſe*, produced by the return of the ſun's light and heat, after the equinoctial rains; and then with a ſudden alluſion to the failure of the unfortunate expedition againſt Carthagena, 1739, he expreſſes himſelf, as follows;

Such as of late, at Carthagena quench'd
The Britiſh fire. You, gallant Vernon, ſaw
The miſerable ſcene; you, pitying, ſaw
To infant-weakneſs ſunk * the warrior's arm
Saw the *deep-racking* pang, the *ghaſtly* form,
The *lip pale-quivering*, and the *beamleſs eye*,
No more with ardour bright; you *heard* the *groans*
Of *agonizing ſhips*, *from ſhore to ſhore*:
Heard, *nightly plung'd* amid the *ſullen waves*,
The *frequent corſe*;————————

THIS ſcene was ſkilfully introduced. It is affecting; for it is a ſcene of diſeaſe and death, painted by the happieſt ſelection of attitudes and circumſtances, and with all the expreſſive power of language: We not only behold images of diſtreſs; we hear the burſting groans in which its feelings are inarticulately expreſſed: Fancy conveys

* *Sunk* is not a happy word here.

conveys to the heart of the reader, *the groans of agonizing ſhips*, ſo as to awe it with inexpreſſible horrour: We hear, more diſtinctly for it is heard by Vernon, the *frequent corſe, nightly plunged amid the ſullen waves;* juſt as his preſence ſeems, in like manner, to bring us more preſent to the preceding ſcene of diſtreſs. But *Vernon* himſelf is the principal figure: He is ſimply called *gallant;* and we are then left to think, that as *gallant*, he was generouſly humane,—that he was admiral of the Fleet,—that his honour ſuffered by the failure of the expedition, unavoidable after this diſtreſs, —and to conceive, if we can, how painful muſt have been his ſentiments of ſympathy, of anticipated ſhame, of deſpair! But had the poet here exerted even greatly leſs poetic power, yet muſt the feelings of his Britiſh readers have been ſtrongly agitated. The diſtreſs, and the ſorrow, of that unfortunate expedition were recent and national. On the ſtage, theſe verſes might probably have had the ſame effect, as the Tragedy of Phynichus, named the *capture of Miletus*, turning on a recent domeſtic misfortune; at which the whole of an Athenian audience melted into tears; but the Britiſh poet would not have been fined;—as was the Athenian, for painting in too lively colours, calamities which had befallen his countrymen, through their inability to prevent them.

In the deſcription of the plague, I ſee nothing better than the following fine expreſſion of a genuine ſtate of ſentiment;

——————————Love himſelf,
Savag'd by woe, forgets the tender tie,
The ſweet engagement of the feeling heart.
This is a noble groupe for the Painter;
———o'er the proſtrate city, black Deſpair
Extends her raven-wing;————
And this again,
——————————while, to complete
the ſcene of deſolation, ſtretch'd around,
The grim guards ſtand, denying all retreat,
And give the fleeing wretch a better death.

There is a ſublimity in the manner in which our poet tranſiently enumerates the *brazen-vaulted ſkies*, the *iron fields*, the *infuriate hill*, *ſhooting the pillar'd flame*, and the *expanding earthquake;* as he returns from thoſe regions in which Heat reigns in all its horrours, to deſcribe an event of grandeur and terrour in theſe temperate climes. The whole deſcription of the thunder-ſtorm is faithful and ſublime. I have been ſtruck particularly with the following verſes;

——————————A boding ſilence reigns
Dread thro' the dun expanſe; ſave the dull ſound
That from the mountain, previous to the ſtorm,
Rolls o'er the muttering earth, diſturbs the flood,
And ſhakes the foreſt-leaf without a breath.

There is ſomething in this, with which Fancy awes the heart, as by the preſence of a ſuperior being. The thunder, with all its accompaniments are awful. The

mild

mild characters and gentle loves of CELADON and his AMELIA are happily introduced to soothe the mind amid the terrours of the thunder. The comparison of CELADON's agony, and attitude to those of a sculptur'd figure gives an interesting image to the imagination.

So, faint resemblance! on the marble tomb,
The well-dissembled mourner stooping stands,
For ever silent, and for ever sad.

The face of nature is delightful after the thunder. The story of DAMON and MUSIDORA is pretty. Musidora's billet should have ended with the word *Discreet* in the last line. The Evening is delightful. And in a Summer's Evening walk through pleasing scenes, it is natural for the heart and fancy to take every occasion, as here, of turning to the amiable and the great characters, who may be, by any, even the slightest relations, connected with those scenes.

IT is in the natural progress of thought, too, at such a time, and in such a situation, that the poet again turning his attention to the prospect before him, is struck with its richness and cultivated beauty, and led to launch into the praises of his country. I fear, that some of the characters he introduces, may be too fondly marked. RALEIGH had all the ability, but perhaps not all the virtue ascribed to him. Why did not Sir PHILIP SIDNEY obtain a larger portion of praise? Was it because HYDE, the ancestor of CORNBURY, had been the faithful adherent of his sovereigns in their

diſtreſs, not the rebellious opponent of their authority, that Thomſon, in his zeal for freedom, could not here conſecrate a verſe to his memory? ALGERNON SIDNEY's character ſeems to have been rather a doubtful one. SHAFTSBURY was a conceited, oſtentatious philoſopher, who, I believe, did not always underſtand himſelf; although in Thomſon's earlier days, his verboſe writings and his confuſed, inaccurate philoſophy were indeed, very much in faſhion. I admire the praiſe of MILTON; in ſuch inſtances, general language ſeems to be uſed, becauſe the object was too vaſt for comprehenſion; and too ſplendid for minute inſpection;—and when thus uſed, it produces a moſt powerful effect in enlarging the fancy, and overpowering the feelings.

A genius, univerſal as his theme,
Aſtoniſhing as chaos, as the bloom
Of blowing Eden, fair, as Heaven ſublime.——

SPENCER and CHAUCER are both ſkilfully and poetically characterized.

BUT, had *Scotland*, the author's native country, produced no illuſtrious characters in arms or arts, who might have been worthy of his praiſe? Or was he ſo ſlaviſhly overawed by the national prejudices of our Engliſh brethren, that he durſt not celebrate any illuſtrious Scottiſh character? Would WALLACE have diſgraced our poet's verſe? Would the firſt of the JAMESES? BUCHANAN? G. DOUGLAS? WILLIAM MAITLAND? KIRCALDY of GRANGE? The ſecond of the

the two ARGYLES who were beheaded in the laſt century? NAPIER, the noble inventor of Logarithms? WILLIAM DRUMMOND, eminent alike as a hiſtorian, and as a poet? BURNET and CARSTAIRS, the friends of King WILLIAM? PATERSON, the leader in the unfortunate *Darien* expedition? Or ANDREW FLETCHER, a genius poliſhed and cultivated as Raleigh,—a whig,—zealous for liberty, as Ruſſel or Sidney?——I could have wiſhed that Thomſon had not thus overlooked his countrymen.

BEAUTY has been ſo long and often the poet's theme, that it is not now eaſy to ſay any thing new, and at the ſame time very fine of it. I know not that it has ever been more elegantly or more delicately praiſed, than in ſome pieces of Perſian poetry of which I have lately ſeen tranſlations; although not having them by me, I cannot inſert a quotation. The ſame genius ſeems to have inſpired both HAFIZ and ANACREON; and in delicacy of painting, the Greek poet does not excel the Perſian. I have elſewhere remarked, that Thomſon, in his ſmaller poems, ſings love and beauty with almoſt inimitable eaſe and felicity of thought and expreſſion. And I think him little leſs happy in the praiſes of Britiſh beauty which he introduces here, near the cloſe of his Summer. *What youthful poet in love* ever *fancied* any thing finer than

——————the parted lip,
Like the red roſebud, moiſt with morning dew,
Breathing delight;——————————

SOLOMON

SOLOMON ſays; Thy lips are like a thread of ſcarlet. CATULLUS, how exquiſitely!

At Acme leviter caput reflectens,
Et, dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos
Illo purpureo ore *ſuaviata*,—De Acme et Septimios:

THOMSON gives, to be ſure, very fine eyes to our Britiſh ladies:

The look reſiſtleſs, piercing to the ſoul,
And by the ſoul inform'd, when dreſs'd in love,
She ſits high ſmiling in the conſcious eye.——

But, how much more delicate the *ebrios ocellos* of Catullus! or this of Solomon; *Thou haſt dove's eyes within thy locks!*——

HAVING mentioned the delicacy with which female beauty is deſcribed in the Song of Solomon; I cannot help remarking a ſtriking but, I believe, hitherto unnoticed reſemblance between an amorous thought in this ſame compoſition of the royal Hebrew bard, and one of the fineſt of Shakeſpeare's Love Sonnets.

Take away thine eyes from me; for they have overcome me: Song of Solomon: ch. vi. v. 5.

The ſonnet is:

Take, O take, thoſe lips *away*,
That ſo ſweetly were forſworn;
And *theſe eyes*, the break of day,
Lights that do miſlead the morn;
But, my kiſſes bring again,
Seals of love, but ſealed in vain.

The

The thought, to the fifth line, is the ſame in the ſonnet, as in the quotation from Solomon.

THE national character of the Britiſh, at leaſt the bright ſide of it, is finely ſhewn in the verſes which ſucceed the praiſes of beauty.

In the images of the ſetting ſun I ſee nothing better than this

——————And now a golden curve
Gives one bright glance, then total diſappears.

The moral reflections which ſuceed, are excellent, and ſuitably introduced, but not very highly poetical. Evening is finely perſonified;

Confeſs'd, from yonder ſlow-extinguiſh'd clouds
All æther ſoftening, ſober Evening takes
Her wonted ſtation in the middle air:
A thouſand *ſhadows* at her beck. Firſt *this*
She ſends on earth; than *that* of deeper dye
Steals ſoft behind; and then a *deeper* ſtill,
In circle following circle, gathers round,
To cloſe the face of things. A freſher gale
Begins to wave the wood, and ſtir the ſtream,
Sweeping with ſhadowy guſt, the fields of corn;
While the quail clamours for his running mate
Wide o'er the thiſtly lawn, as ſwells the breeze,
A whitening ſhower of vegetable down,
Amuſive floats.——————————

This is one of the beſt deſcriptions in the poem. The *ſtealing* progreſs of the *ſhadows* of Evening is admirable

rable. But the following glorious picture in Collins's Ode to Evening is more fanciful than any thing perhaps that Thomſon could have ſaid on the ſame occaſion:

O Nymph reſerv'd, while now the *bright hair'd ſun*
Sits on *yon* weſtern *tent*, whoſe *cloudy ſkirts*,
With brede æthereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:——

The addreſs to Philoſophy, with which Summer is here concluded, is learned and dignified, but leſs pleaſing than the praiſes of the conjugal and parental duties with which Spring is cloſed.

Such, then, is Thomſon's Summer. It exhibits fewer beautiful and pleaſing, but a greater number of ſublime images than his Spring. The morning affords the moſt pleaſing and delicate imagery that is peculiar to this ſeaſon. The heats of noon naturally drive the contemplative wanderer into the depth of the foreſt, and to the ſheltered edge of the ſtream. Delightful are the cool retreats which theſe afford. And there is nothing finer in our poet's works than the ſublime enthuſiaſm of meditation to which he is there elevated. It might have had an happy effect in his poem, if he had choſen ſome ſparry grotto or ſtoried hermitage for his receſs. The tranſition to the torrid zone was well-imagined. Its wonders are nobly ſung; but might have adorned his poem ſtill more, if he had known them, as they have been deſcribed by latter voyagers and travellers. Juan Fernandez, the Pelew iſlands, or the manners of the Sandwich iſlands would

have

have afforded much to enrich his poem. The thunder-ſtorm is noble. So alſo are the praiſes of Britain. The evening ſcene is ſweet, but ſeems to have been haſtily executed, as if the poet had been then impatient to cloſe his poem. The praiſes of Philoſophy ſuit a Summer Evening. This poem has leſs unity of deſign than Spring: And leſs of that delicate imagery which is moſt pleaſing of all which external nature exhibits. The poems differ, as the Seaſons do.

AUTUMN comes next. He is not introduced as a very ſtriking allegorical figure. The praiſes and the progreſs of Induſtry are intereſting and poetical; although, in my mind, leſs ſo here, than in the *Caſtle of Indolence*. The barbarian is ſtrikingly painted, who

——————for his acorn meal
Fought the fierce, tuſky boar; a ſhivering wretch!

Nor leſs intereſting is the picture of Induſtry when the poet ſings, how that he

Tore from his limbs the blood-polluted fur,
And wrapp'd them in the woolly veſtment warm.

It would not be eaſy to fancy a more intereſting groupe of ruſtics, than Thomſon's reapers; unleſs perhaps *the gleaners* who

——————ſpread around, and here and there
Spike after ſpike, their ſcanty harveſt pick.

Their appearance melts the heart, and prepares it to receive with according ſympathy, theſe fine ſentiments, worthy of Thomſon;

Be not too narrow, husbandmen! but fling
From the full sheaf, with charitable stealth,
The liberal handful. Think, oh! grateful, think!
How good the God of Harvest is to you;

The story of Lavinia has been too long and too universally admired, to stand in need of my praise. It is the gentle delicacy of Lavinia's own character, with the contrast of her humbled fortune, that gives her story its power over the heart. Its similarity to the story of Ruth is sufficiently evident. In Thomson's hands, this Scripture history loses nothing, but the fine and peculiar colouring of the Hebrew manners.

The harvest flood is nobly described. The distress of the peasant, and the sympathetic cast of the poet's heart are together affectingly expressed in these lines;

——————his drowning ox at once
Descending, with his labours scatter'd round,
He sees; and instant o'er his shivering thought
Comes winter unprovided, and a train
Of clamant children dear.——————

The shooting scenes are well marked, and like the bird-nesting of Spring touch the poet's humanity. The chase of the hare is interesting; more so even than the fine hare-chase, at Sir Roger's seat, in the second volume of the Spectator. The chase of the Stag is too common in books, and too uncommon elsewhere, in Britain, to be equally entertaining as the chase of the hare. I have not Somerville's Chase in my hands; otherwise

otherwiſe I might compare the parallel deſcriptions of the two poets. The fox-chaſe is very well deſcribed. But, had Thomſon been himſelf a fox-hunter, he would probably have extended it to a greater length, and would have entertained us with many more pieces of delicate painting, as it went on. The cheerful evening which ſucceeds the fox-chaſe is amuſively enough repreſented. In the letters, however, of the laſt Lord Lyttelton, which although publiſhed under his name, are perhaps not his,—is an account of a fox-chaſe at which he relates, that he aſſiſted in an odd diſguiſe,—and after the chaſe, made the evening unuſually pleaſing, by the powers of his wit, to his fellow-hunters; till at length the time came when he could no longer detain them from the allurements of ſleep: All retired; but ſtrange howlings from the ſtranger's room ſoon drew all thither, in alarm: He was naked, and with a ſcourge, tearing his own back, as never did Flagellant Friar: At his intreaty, however, they again retired, as if no ſuch ſight had been ſeen by them: Again they were alarmed; again they haſtened to diſcover the cauſe: They beheld another ſcene of Flagellation: They retired again at the intreaty of the Flagellant; ſatisfied with his promiſe to explain in the morning whatever might now appear myſterious in his conduct: In the morning, he was gone. Such an incident as this, told by Thomſon, might have finely enlivened his foxhunter's evening.

THE

THE nut-gathering is an autumnal amusement worthy of Thomson's genius to celebrate. And he has indeed said some very pretty things of it. The pressing of Cyder, and Philips, who has sung it, perhaps more like a brewer of cyder than a poet, are next skilfully introduced. Nor is the compliment inopportune which the poet now pays to DODINGTON and his friend YOUNG. He mixes poetry nobly with philosophy when he is soon after led from viewing the *mists* and *exhalations*, to look into the bowels of the mountains and the bosom of the earth, for their sources. The migratory birds and those which pass the winter in a torpid state, next furnish our poet with some fine autumnal topics. He paints with the curious and correct hand of a naturalist, the clustering together of the swallows when they take refuge in torpidity from the winter's cold. I am pleased to see him take an opportunity of mentioning *Caledonia*, and of bestowing at least some niggard praise on my favourite WALLACE.

THERE is the empassioned glow of patriotism and eloquence, if not of poetry, in the following lines. *Thomson is to be reverenced as one of the early friends of our manufactures.*

Oh! is there not some patriot, in whose power
That best, that godlike luxury is placed,
Of blessing thousands, thousands yet unborn,
Thro' late posterity? some, large of soul,
To chear dejected industry? to give

A double

A double harveſt to the pining ſwain?
And teach the lab'ring hand the ſweets of toil!
How, by the fineſt art, the native robe
To weave; how, white as hyperborean ſnow,
To form the lucid lawn; with venturous oar,
How to daſh wide the billow; nor look on,
Shamefully paſſive, while Batavian fleets
Defraud us of the glittering, finny ſwarms
That heave our friths and crowd upon our ſhores;
How all enlivening trade to rouſe, and wing
The proſperous ſail, from every growing port,
Uninjur'd, round the ſea-incircled globe;
And thus in ſoul united, as in name,
Bid Britain reign the miſtreſs of the deep!

Theſe verſes breathe the patriotiſm, without the national prejudices of a Scotchman. The illuſtrious JOHN, Duke of Argyle, and the great, preſident FORBES are with ſkilful praiſe, named as men aſſiduous to perform to their country the patriotic ſervices above enumerated. Argyle was praiſed by moſt of the wits of his time. FORBES was Thomſon's friend: And ſeldom was praiſe better earned than that here beſtowed on him.

Thee, Forbes, too, whom every worth attends,
As truth ſincere, as weeping friendſhip kind,
Thee, truly generous, and in ſilence great,
Thy country feels thro' her reviving arts,

Plann'd

Plann'd by thy wiſdom, by thy ſoul inform'd;
And ſeldom has ſhe known a friend like thee.

FEW paſſages in Thomſon's writings are higher wrought, than the deſcription of the fading colours and falling leaves of the woods in the end of Autumn. He has repeatedly before, betrayed a turn to philoſophic contemplation. But, the appearances of this part of the ſeaſon are peculiarly ſuited to encourage the indulgence of ſuch a temper. With what gentle humanity does the poet ſympathize in the diſtreſs of the winged tribes, melancholy under the gloom of the ſeaſon, and diſconſolate for the loſs of their murthered mates! Never were poetry and philoſophy more affectingly united than where the poet marks the approach, and expreſſes his ſenſe of the influence of the power of *Philoſophic Melancholy*. He riſes here to an higher pitch of enthuſiaſm, than in that ſcene of contemplation in Summer which bears a conſiderable reſemblance to this. I know not, that any poet has ever yet equalled Thomſon in the expreſſion of the rapture of elevated contemplation.—STOWE was then one of the fineſt places in England. COBHAM is well known to have been celebrated alſo by Pope. It ſhould ſeem that from the firſt appearance of the late Earl of CHATHAM on the theatre of public life, his future eminence has been foreſeen.

THE progreſs of the full moon, the meteors of the harveſt evening, the fears which theſe ſuggeſt to bo-

ding

ding superstition, afford subjects of beauty and of grandeur to the poet. *Will with the whisp*, and the meteors which mislead the traveller in the darkness of the night are happily celebrated. But, COLLINS in his Ode "on the Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland," has celebrated those and all our other nightly objects of vulgar terrour, more happily, I think, than any other poet. The mornings in the end of Autumn differ so much from those in its beginning, in their temperature, and in the appearances of things by which they are distinguished, that our poet must be confessed to have done well in giving us a second description of a harvest-morn. The robbery of the bee-hive is one of those subjects in which his genius delighted. How awfully is the fate of Palermo introduced, and how aptly the sudden ruin of a great city compared to the destruction of the bee-hive!

Thus a proud city, populous and rich,
Full of the works of peace, and high in joy,
At the theatre or feast, or sunk in sleep,
(As late, Palermo, was thy fate) is seiz'd
By some dread earthquake, and convulsive hurl'd
Sheer from the *black* foundation, stench-involv'd,
Into a gulph of blue sulphureous flame.

THE festivities in which the rustics indulge at the close of harvest have not escap'd our poet's notice. And yet, I should think, that he might easily have made more of a Harvest Home. And, if *Hallowe'en* could

could have been ſung by Thomſon, yet BURNS not deterred from ſinging it; I ſhould have been glad, that Thomſon had told how happily gaiety and ſuperſtition, are, at *Hollowe'en*, reconciled by his countrymen. To ſay the truth, I ſhould be ſorry, if our common people ſhould ceaſe to celebrate Hallowe'en with the uſual cheerful ſolemnities.

THE praiſes of a Country Life are imitated partly from one of the fineſt of all Horace's compoſitions, his ſecond Epode, partly from Virgil's ſecond Georgic. In the following verſes he ſeems to have drawn the character of the peaſantry, at leaſt its fair ſide, with a more expreſſive and more correct pencil than either:

Here too dwells ſimple truth; plain innocence;
Unſullied beauty; ſound, unbroken youth,
Patient of labour, with a little pleas'd;
Health ever-blooming, unambitious toil:——

Yet, I think this picture of Horace's more tender than any of Thomſon's.

Quod ſi pudica mulier in partem juvet
Domum, atque dulces liberos,
Sabina qualis, aut perusta ſolibus
Pernicis uxor Apuli:
Sacrum vetuſtis extruat lignis focum
Laſſi ſub adventum viri:
Claudenſque textis cratibus lætum pecus,
Diſtenta ſiccet ubera:

Et

Et horna dulci vina promens dolio,
Dapes inemptas apparet :——

BUT, no encomiaſt of a country life has ever given it half the enchantment with which ROUSSEAU repreſents it in various places through his works. There is a mixture of fancy and of paſſion poured out through all the works of this ſingular man of Genius; he reaſons ſo accutely, even where he reaſons only to err: he diſcerns with ſo ſteady and ſo keen an eye, till ſhadowy forms at laſt ariſe before his dazzled ſight: That hardly any writer, whether poet or proſeman, will ever be ſo intereſting as he, on the ſubjects which he handles.

IN the concluding verſes of Autumn Thomſon has, more directly than on a former occaſion, imitated thoſe fine verſes of Virgil's:

Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Muſæ, &c.

In one inſtance, I think, he has excelled his maſter. Where Virgil ſays:

Sin has ne poſſim naturæ adcedere partes,
Frigidus obſtiterit circum præcordia ſanguis;
Rura mihi, et rigui placeant in vallibus amnes;

Thomſon has, more poetically;

———*under* cloſing ſhades,
Inglorious, lay me, by the lowly brook,
And whiſper to my dreams———

WINTER was the firſt written of theſe poems on the Seaſons; and as this ſeaſon preſents more objects of ſublimity

limity than any of the reſt; we ſhall perhaps find, that Thomſon has ſung it with the beſt ſucceſs.

THE Invocation with which it opens, is ſolemn. But the verſes in which he mentions himſelf are an exquiſite little piece in the ſtyle of MILTON's Lamentation, for his own blindneſs. The gloomy aſpect of the winter's day; its diſtreſſing influence on the feelings of man and beaſt; the riſe of the ſtorm; the horrours with which it falls on the face of Nature; and the fancied terrours with which its prevalence oppreſſes the mind,—are deſcribed with an impreſſive force, a dignity, a delicacy, ſuch as hardly any other poet has exhibited in deſcription.

AMID this aſſemblage of ſubjects of ſublimity, and under their impreſſion, the poet naturally feels his accuſtomed emotions of piety awakened. He breaks forth into ſome beautifully pathetic reflections on the Vanities of Life, and in a fine addreſs to the God of Heaven.

THE progreſs of the ſtorm again rouſes him from meditation. He again marks its impreſſions on the face of nature. Then with his wonted delight in ſoft and tender images, he marks the confidence with which the red-breaſt in his diſtreſs ſhelters under the hoſpitality of man. The helpleſs diſtreſs of the flocks is equally painted with that pencil which ſeems to have been the gift of nature to Thomſon alone. The deſcription of the ſwain periſhing among the ſnow is ſo

univerſally admired, that Criticiſm needs not point out its excellence. And after ſuch ſcenes of diſtreſs, the pathetic addreſs to the luxurious and the gay is ſkilfully and naturally introduced. Hardly any deſcription could inſpire more horrour than that of the wolves deſcending from the Alps, the Appenines, and the Pyrenees. I wiſh that our poet had choſen to deſcribe the progreſs of travellers climbing up among thoſe hills of ſnow and ice, piled on mountains already towering to the moſt ſtupendous height. The glance at the Griſons often buried under ſnow in their vallies is happy. I wiſh, that he had introduced ſome ſuch character of the mountaineers, as Goldſmith has given in his Traveller. Rouſſeau, in his letter to *D' Alembert*, on the eſtabliſhment of a theatre at Geneva, deſcribes a little ſociety on a mountain in *Neufchatel*, minutely, delineating their manners, and mode of life in winter, in colouring which would have had a moſt charming effect in this part of Thomſon's Winter.

THE ſcene which our poet chuſes for his retreat amid the horrors of winter is finely fancied;

Now, all amid the rigours of the year,
In the wild depth of winter, while without
The ceaſeleſs winds blow ice, be my retreat,
Between the groaning foreſt and the ſhore
Beat by the boundleſs multitude of waves,
A rural, ſhelter'd, ſolitary ſcene;
Where ruddy fire, and beaming tapers join,

To

To chear the gloom. There ſtudious let me ſit,
And hold high converſe with the *mighty dead.*

The mighty dead whoſe converſe he courts, are Socrates, Leonidas, Ariſtides, Cimon, Timoleon, Phocion, Agis, Aratus, Philopæmon, Grecians,—Junius Brutus, Cincinatus, Regulus, Cato, Marcus Brutus, Romans. Beſide theſe patriots, he views alſo in fancy the poets and philoſophers of Greece and Rome; pays an handſome compliment to Pope; and offers a tribute of ſorrowing praiſe to the memory of Hammond. The amuſements which he then fancies for himſelf and his friends in his winter retirement are worthy of the poet, the philoſopher, and the good man.

AIKENSIDE, in his Ode on the Winter-ſolſtice, indulges in a ſimilar train of thinking; and among other things, ſays beautifully;

How pleaſing wears the wint'ry night,
Spent with the old, illuſtrious dead!
While by the taper's glimm'ring light,
Thoſe awful courts I ſeem to tread;
Where kings and legiſlators lie,
While triumphs move before my eye,
With ev'ry laurel freſh diſplayed;
While pleas'd I taſte th' Ionian ſong,
Or liſten Plato's godlike tongue,
Reſounding through the olive ſhade!

But, of all poets, ancient or modern, COOPER in his *Taſk*, ſeems to me, to have beſt exhibited all the delicate

licate, tender images which Winter affords; eſpecially thoſe connected with domeſtic life.

THE ſtage has been higher honoured by the more poetical praiſes of Milton in his poems on the *Chearful* and on the *Gloomy* character, than by what Thomſon has here ſaid of it.—I am ſorrow that Thomſon ſhould have been, by any means, enſnared to diſgrace himſelf by praiſing a character ſo diſingenuous, as that of CHESTERFIELD.

FROST, ice, and the variations in the modes of life which theſe occaſion, have furniſhed our Poet with happy ſubjects. Would that he had ſung *curling* on the ice, the favourite amuſement of his Countrymen! COOPER has ſince finely celebrated the Empreſs of Ruſſia's palace of ice. The winter-chaſes of the Siberians are admirably celebrated by Thomſon. What can be more affecting than the fall of the Elks and other northern animals, who periſh rather by the ſnows than by the arts of the Hunter?

——————and ſcarce his head
Rais'd o'er the heapy wreath, the branching elk
Lyes ſlumbering ſullen in the white byſs.
The ruthleſs hunter wants nor dogs, nor toils,
Nor with the dread of ſounding bows he drives
The fearful, flying race; with *ponderous clubs*,
As *weak*, againſt the *mountain-heaps*, they *butt*
Their *beating breaſt* in vain, and piteous bray,

He

He lays them *quiv'ring*, on the *enſanguin'd* ſnows.
And with loud ſhouts, rejoicing, bears them home.

HAD our poet been well acquainted with the manners of the Highlanders of Scotland; had he known their native poetry; had the works of Oſſian been in his hands; he might have adorned his winter with a fine epiſode on the circumſtances and manners of the ancient Caledonians, and on the heroes of Fingal. I wiſh, that, in ſpeaking of Lapland, he had made a poetical uſe of the power which the Lapland witches are ſaid to pretend to exert over the winds! With the ſhips and ſailors incloſed by the ice, it might have been well, if he had thought of celebrating thoſe who attempting to paſs the winter in fartheſt Greenland, were, one after another frozen to death in the attitudes of different labours or amuſements in which they had ſeverally engaged.

IT does our poet high honour, that he has beſtowed a noble encomium on Peter the Firſt of Ruſſia. Moſt deſervedly has Peter been ſirnamed *the Great*. He was a barbarian, who by the energy of his own genius having firſt *civilized* and *enlightened* himſelf, then communicated the ſame *illumination* to his fellow-barbarians, and ſtamped the ſame *civilization* on their character. Peter's Paſſion for the arts and arrangements of civilized life was not the whim of a ſavage or a child for pretty trifles,—but the rational preference of a ſound and liberal mind. He travelled not like an *Omai*,

but

but like a *Zeleucus* or *Lycurgus*. The monarchs of rude nations who wish to gain to their subjects the praise of polished civility, commonly seek rather to import some of the most splendid of the Fine, than any of the Useful Arts: but Peter is distinguished above these men by having made the Useful Arts his chief care.

THE effects of a thaw, and of the bursting of the mountains of ice in the Polar Regions are among the last of the topics which Winter furnishes to Thomson's Muse. They are well described. But, the Description presents nothing singularly striking.

THE sentiments with which the Poem concludes, are worthy of our Poet. The Hymn which closes the whole, referring to all the four Seasons alike, is worthy of MILTON, or rather of DAVID.

I THINK it Thomson's first praise, that he has known so well to unite poetry with devotion. The view of the wonders of nature, from time to time, swells his heart to rapture, or induces a train of philosophical reflections: from the one or the other he rises to effusions of gratitude or adoration to Nature's God. Johnson has said finely and justly of WATTS in his Treatise on Logic, that he so skilfully intermingled theological instruction with the explanation of the principles of reasoning, that the student who consults his book only for the rules of science, soon feels himself impelled to pray. Of Thomson, in his Seasons, it may, in like manner be said, that although you may

open the book only for amuſement, you will not be able to read far, with underſtanding and intereſt, without feeling your ſoul inſenſibly raiſed to devotion. I know no book that I would chuſe to put into the hands of an Atheiſt whom I with Chriſtian earneſtneſs, deſired to convert, ſooner than Thomſon's Seaſons.

THIS with various other of the nobleſt pieces of poetry in the Engliſh language appear to me to afford a ſufficient refutation of a critical opinion of Johnſon's which has been received with too ready and too general an acquieſcence. Mentioning ſome verſion or other, I think it is, of the Pſalms of David: he has taken occaſion to launch out into a ſhort diſſertation to prove, that poetry is an unfit vehicle, accompaniment, or auxiliary to devotion.—I ſhall allow, that it may be difficult, or perhaps impoſſible to produce a body of Devotional Poetry which ſhall be at the ſame time, highly poetical, correctly and rationally devotional, and accommodated to the uſe of the moſt uninſtructed claſſes of the people. But, if it be true, as I have endeavoured to maintain, that ſentiment, ardent ſentiment, is the firſt part of poetry; if it be true, as has been aſſerted by one of the moſt judicious and at the ſame time, the moſt delicate in taſte of ancient or modern critics, that, "Poetry is the Language of Paſſion;"—Surely, then, the language of true devotion can never be other than poetical. Again, the view of the works of God; attention to the plans of

his providence; the conſideration of our nature, our circumſtances, our faculties, and our feelings,—"how fearfully and wonderfully we are made;"—Theſe have the beſt tendency, as we have juſt ſeen in the inſtance of the Seaſons, to raiſe the ſoul to pious ejaculation. But, no ſubjects are more ſuſceptible than theſe of the ornaments of poetry. That poetry indeed which conſiſts only in pomp of language, and in ſmoothneſs or variety of verſification, is unfit for the purpoſes of devotion. But, *it* is a baſtard poetry, degenerated from the native dignity and fervour of this Divine Art, with a degeneracy not unlike that which we ſee take place among plants and animals. Sorry ſhould I be to ſee Poetry excluded from every other province, ſave that of ſoothing folly, or of ſtimulating the languor of vice!

HAVING now, then, haſtily reviewed the SEASONS OF THOMSON, in regard to their *Sentiments* and *Imagery;* we have ſeen, that he has ſkilfully ſelected almoſt all the faireſt, the moſt ſplendid, and the moſt ſublime images which the Seaſons in their Revolution, exhibit. With theſe he has intermingled many ſentiments, the effuſions of philoſophical, of poetical, and of religious rapture,—and many, the expreſſions of tender, genuine ſympathy. He ſometimes aſſumes the tone of a monitor and a teacher, and with the energetic eloquence of a Prophet, diſſuades from vice, or rouſes the languid ſoul to active virtue: A turn for declamation or harangue appears indeed to have been one of his talents. Per-

haps, ſome epiſodes might have been ſelected from real hiſtory,—particularly from our own hiſtory—which might have accorded well enough with the characters of theſe pieces, and might, at the ſame time, have been uſeful to compact them, and render them more intereſting than they are. Thomſon has viewed nature with the care and the nice diſcernment of a Naturaliſt, and has ſelected his images with the ſkilful diſcrimination of a man of taſte. The objects which he exhibits appear in thoſe lights exactly in which their forms and colours have the moſt pleaſing effect which they can produce to the eye. *But*, to ſay the truth, *I do not ſee that he has improved their beauties with too much of that magic colouring with which the fancy of the impaſſioned inamorato often gives to the object of his fondneſs, a perfection of beauty which none but himſelf can diſcover.* Yet, the power of doing this, is that which, above all other qualities, conſtitutes the Poet. It is in this that the rural figures and ſcenes of Rouſſeau ſeem to me to excel thoſe of Thomſon, and of all other poets. But, the poet is great, who, in his imitations, exhibits Nature without diſadvantage. To improve her in your deſcriptions, is, to exert more than the powers of humanity.

My firſt intention was to examine next the *diction* and the *meaſure* of the Seaſons at proportionate length. But, having already taken up more than that proportion of room which the Printer originally appropriated

for

for the reception of my Critical Lucubrations; I am obliged to imitate the example of the Public ſpeaker who perceives his audience drowſy, or has loſt the thread of his diſcourſe, and to defer the reſt of what I had to ſay to another opportunity: Only adding, that,

ALTHOUGH Thomſon be pompous, nay gorgeous in his language; it ſeems never to encumber him; unleſs perhaps in the expreſſion of a trite, moral truth, or in the deſcription of objects too familiarly known in all their parts, to be ſuſceptible of true poetical embelliſhment. His ſtyle is peculiarly his own: but, I think, I can diſtinguiſh in it a mixture of Pope and Milton. The melody of his meaſure may be at times, ſomewhat monotonous. But, his pauſes are, in the whole, varied with great ſkill. In ſubjects ſuch as theſe Seaſons, I think blank verſe better than rhyme, for the ſame reaſons for which, a piece of very fine poetry is better read than ſung: The melody may be ſuch as to withdraw the attention too much from higher excellencies.

I SHALL conclude in the words of Virgil:

Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
Nam neque me tantum venientis ſibilus Auſtri,
Nec percuſſa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
Saxoſas inter decurrunt flumina valles!